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THE
ROMANTICK LADY

From a photograph by Miss Virginia Prall.

FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT

This was Mrs. Burnett's favorite photograph in latter years.

THE ROMANTICK LADY

(FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT)

THE LIFE STORY OF AN IMAGINATION

BY

VIVIAN BURNETT

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
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FANTASY

TOUCHING AT THE OUTSET ON CERTAIN MATTERS WHICH, THOUGH NOT CLAIMED TO BE PROVABLE FACTS, NEVERTHELESS DESERVE CONSIDERATION

An account of the life of Frances Hodgson Burnett will inevitably ask the reader to give some kind of an answer to Peter Pan's famous question, "Do you believe in fairies?" If he has a natural inclination to believe, or can summon some willingness to, it will undoubtedly be of great assistance to him in getting a true understanding of the influences and the events in the story. To those who knew Mrs. Burnett with any intimacy it was plain that in all her thinking and doing was something not quite to be measured or weighed according to the usual mortal methods. Approached in the right spirit, the whole matter was easy of explanation. One had merely to admit that she was partly a fairy.

That such a thing might be, she herself was quite willing—even eager—to admit. To her such a situation presented the most delightful possibilities. There were frequent hints in her talk or her writing that in herself she actually sensed such a dual allegiance. No one could have had a stronger faith in fairies and in the fairy power—and she rejoiced that she was able, even if dimly, to recognize what she believed to be fairies, everywhere, doing good works in all sorts of disguises, despite the unbelief of a dull-witted world. She would, in fact, have liked herself to have been entirely a fairy. Many times she said or wrote: "Wouldn't it be nice to be a fairy?" or "How I would like to be a fairy!" To her children—trusting co-believers—she often outrightly claimed fairy gifts when it seemed that only superhuman power could assuage nursery griefs. "Don't you know that Mammieday is a fairy?" was

a common prelude to some magic of comfort or healing. And, in a kindred line, she frequently mentioned certain mythical worthies and heroes she knew of in her own ancestry as though she often felt their spell come down upon her through the dusky corridors of the ages. Thus, indeed, it seemed that the mystic influences in her life had begun almost before her birth.

And in her birth itself there was undoubtedly something more than could be covered by the conventional statement that it occurred on such and such a date, at such and such a place, of so and so as parents. To chronicle the matter in such terms of realism would be to strike a wrong note at the outset. Realism was the smallest part of Frances Hodgson Burnett as she lived and wrote. The memory of a nursery co-believer seems to claim that there were, indeed, fancies expressed about her birth, just as about those mythical ancestors; fancies not prideful, but fancies that helped to explain to herself and others.

This vague recollection, influenced and enlarged, quite probably, by observations made during a life-long association rich in mutual affection and understanding, prompts an account of this important event in a vein which may suggest the ingredient which must all through be added to prosaic details if the reader is to see eye to eye with the main character. It naturally shapes itself in fairy-story form, for so would the half-fairy person herself have chosen to make the record.

* * *

Once upon a time—and this was not so very long ago, nor in a very far—or fair—country—a little princess was born. Her parents were king and queen in a realm of love—not a very large one, but still a kingdom over which they ruled with quiet and kindly power. The queen's name was Eliza, and her subjects most often called her "Dear Mamma." The king's name was "Dear Edwin," and he was quite a kingly-looking person indeed, with an erect and dignified carriage, a handsome face, bright, but poetic, eyes, and a nice, full beard. This was

the first princess of the kingdom, but not the only child, for there were little princes who had come before: Prince Herbert and Prince John George. Both, however, at this time were babies and much too young to be seriously concerned about the arrival of their princess sister.

The palace—well, it must have been a palace, since a princess was being born there. Yet, those who might have been passing the unpretentious brick dwelling in Cheetham Hill, Manchester, England, on the afternoon of November 24, 1849, would probably not have thought of describing that particular house as a palace. But it certainly was the place of birth of this particular princess and the beginning of this fairy-story, so we must consider it a palace.

And another proof of its being a palace was the fact that there were fairies there. That's certain—the rest of the story shows that as true as true is. For who weaves spells and gives gifts, if it is not fairies, and certainly gifts were given at that time and spells woven.

Throughout Fairyland the news had travelled that there was fairy work to do. How wonderful to see the tiny creatures gathering in the shadowed second-story room that November day, with all their spangly, gauzy garments, sparkling, jewelled crowns, bright-colored wings, and star-capped staffs, coming in, as fairies magically do, through closed doors and windows from the misty, murky, blustering English winter! What a sight to watch them cluster at the foot of the great queen's bed, jostling in loving anxiety to get a peep at the very new little princess, all fresh from another far-away world, sweet and innocent, and ready for their blessing! How eagerly they begin to consult about the gifts each wants to give her!

* * *

It is the fairies' hour. For just these magic minutes she belongs to them, and in that bustling, little conclave at the foot of the bed lies the fate of her future.

And now one speaks up: "My gift of love to her shall be a strong body and a fair face," says she in spangly purple as she pirouettes forward with fluttering wings and waves her golden wand above the downy head.

"A fine dower to begin with," says she of the brown-gold garments, advancing. "My gift shall be a heart to feel deeply and truly. With that she should never go astray." She taps the coverlet over the little heart with her tiny wand and floats tip-toe away.

"And for hearts you need courage," says she with wings colored like a lake under moonbeams. "I give her courage." She lays her wand upon the dimpled fists. They seem to move as if to grasp and tighten around it.

"And what is the strength of courage but hope?" says she in scarlet and gold. "I give her the power to hope and remain undismayed." Her wand falls upon the little shoulders.

The pale-green one steals softly to the bedside. "The little eyes are closed now," she murmurs as she waves her star-clustered wand, "but they shall see, oh, how deeply they shall see."

"And she shall understand," chimes in the gray one, reaching over to touch ever so gently the little forehead, round and high with something more than a baby bigness.

"She shall understand, yes, even to understanding and bearing good fortune," says the sprite in deep blue. "That is my dower to her."

"And I add to it a desire to divide her gifts of fortune with others," puts in the grass-green one.

"Ah, yes, and my gift goes with that, too," tinkles another. "A glad soul to see happiness everywhere, to rejoice in it with every one." (Was it Queen Silverbell who said this?)

And the one shining like the rainbow, stepping up, says: "Mine shall be the gift of words so that the gladness she thinks and sees and understands she can put into stories, coin into

wit, and thus share it with every one; the power to put fairy wings on her pen, so that no realm can be a stranger to it, and what it writes will speak the language of all hearts, whatsoever their land or station. And with it I give a tongue to mint her happiest thoughts into golden phrases, flashing laughter and bringing joy to all who hear her."

A buzz of approval rises from the happy group, and they wave their wands joyously above their heads, dancing with fairy lightness and making an animated wreath of color about the big bed as they hop and flutter in their gaiety.

And who is this who steps out from the darkness of the corner—red, brown, and hairy, with low, broad frame? And though so bearded and heavy featured, his face bears a look not unkind. The fairies, curious, halt in their fluttery dance.

The stranger steps to the foot of the bed. While short, he walks erect, the neck set far back on shoulders broad and powerful. The keen but friendly eyes look out from under the shaggy brows at the dimpled pinkness—baby hands and face—just showing above the coverlet. "She belongs to me, too," he says, as the fairies gaze askance at him. "She is my kinswoman. I also have given her gifts. I am Cadraad Haard, Chieftain, who sat in the Isles of Angelsey, and ages ago gave out justice with courage and cunning. Bards sang of my bravery and truth throughout the wide land of Britain, and further. My blood runs in her veins and it will never let her forget that she is of the clan of the courageous and doughty Cadraad. May her inheritance prove a blessing. I pray it may not be a curse."

Scarce has he finished when the fairy circle, now fearless and gathered close about him, is broken in upon by an excited new arrival, a fairy in truth, but much bedraggled, as if perhaps she had had to make her entrance down the chimney-flue, or in some other unhappy way. Scowls cloud her face, dirt dims her wings, the brightness of her wand is misted, and the star in its tip is almost extinguished. "You might have waited

for me," she exclaims petulantly. "I forgot; I was far away; I could not get here before. Now I know you have given out all the choicest gifts."

"I gave her beauty," says the Purple One.

"I gave her a feeling heart," says the Brown-and-Gold One.

"My gift was courage," says the Moon-Lake One.

"Mine was hope," chimes Scarlet and Gold.

"Vision was mine," speaks up Pale-Green.

"Understanding mine," adds Fairy Gray.

"Faithfulness under good fortune was my dower," says Deep-Blue.

"I gave generosity," laughs Grass-Green.

"And I a glad soul," tinkles Queen Silverbell.

And the Rainbow Fairy says: "Mine was the gift of words."

The new fairy, stamping her foot, flies into a rage. "That was just what I wanted to give her—the power of putting thoughts into words. You have all done this on purpose. You might have waited for me." Pout and scowl begin to vie for mastery in her fairy face. No vestige of joy is left as she shrugs up her tiny shoulders and turns her back sulkily on her fairy sisters. They gather about with smiles and cajolings, trying to comfort her, but still she pouts, with her little chin dug angrily into her breast.

Suddenly she turns. "You have given all the gifts—and my special one, too. All right, there's no other left for me to give but"—and she looks angrily around at all of them—"but an Imp." She shouts out the hated word and the fairies shrink back, their rosy cheeks quickly grown pale. "No, no," they cry in chorus. "Yes," shouts out the injured one, "an Imp; an imp that will pinch and tweak; an imp that will worry and sadden; an imp that will dart about and jump out unexpectedly; an imp that will scowl and make faces and chatter and worry. Yes, an Imp."

The fairies are in consternation, for as she chants these dread words she has waved her wand over the new-born babe and this has irretrievably woven the unkind spell.

"Oh, you naughty one," exclaims Queen Silverbell. "You have ruined all the good we hoped to do. You must be old Queen Crosspatch, her very self. How could a fairy be so unfairy? What shall we do?" The fairies stand in despair, with drooping wings. Out from the dark corner again moves the figure of Cadraad Haard, and he, turning to face the dejected group, speaks in comforting tones: "The spirit of Cadraad Haard was never daunted by man or ghost. She is my kinswoman. No imp can dismay her. Do not fear. All your gifts will be safe in her hands." Joy reigns again, and the fairies, consoled, continue their dance.

* * *

Now the room grows dark. "See," says the Purple One. "Those are the last rays of the sunshine coming through the window. They will make a road to our home for us."

And so, with a hop and a flutter, turning homeward from their labors, they climb the sun's rays up to the window-sill, and pass out into the twilight.

If the reader wonders why it was that all this one mortal met during long years in this work-a-day world so glowed, to her, with rosy light that it immediately became Romance and slipped into Story—that she was indeed an embodied Imagination, standing, in her thought, as it were, a-tip-toe, scarce resting at all upon the prosaic earth, is there not a hint of a possible explanation in what has been set down above? For what is this Imagination—but having one's eyes opened, and one's heart blessed by the Fairies?

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CHAPTER I

FIRST ADVENTURES IN ROMANCE

And so, Frances Hodgson Burnett was born at Cheetham Hill, Manchester, England, November 24, 1849. Her parents were Eliza Boond Hodgson and Edwin Hodgson, and she was christened Frances Eliza, so that her mother's name might be preserved in the family. Two sisters followed her, Edith Mary and Edwina, as the two brothers, Herbert and John George, had preceded her. That the father was always referred to as "dear Edwin," or "dear papa," and the mother as "dear mamma," is evidence of the affection and kindly appreciation that ruled in the Hodgson household. Edwin Hodgson, although not tall, gave the impression of height, because of his straight back and the fine way in which he carried his head. This characteristic was inherited by Frances, who, when she grew up, always walked with so erect a bearing that no one ever suspected how few her actual inches were.

"Dear Edwin's" gifts were numerous, perhaps the most important being his amiable disposition. Such vague recollections as remain of him picture a gentle, talented, even amusing person, who gave rather more time to the nursery folk than was usual for a father of the mid-Victorian period. There is much testimony that he loved his wife devotedly. One brief letter from "dear Edwin's" pen survives, written with tact and gallantry, in the earliest hours of his honeymoon, and to no less person than his mother-in-law.

November 28, 1844.
Lockwood's Hotel,
Pavement, York.

DEAR MOTHER:

This is the first letter you have ever received from me—and although I have tried for a great number of years in order to be qualified and admitted into your family—I trust the appellation is pleasing to you.

We arrived here last night, all safe, thank God, but as you may very well conceive, completely tired out. Today we had purposed taking a drive, but the weather has changed—and we have been looking at the Cathedral and other places. Our stay here depends a good deal on the weather—but we are sure to stay here over Sunday (God willing) so that if Mr. White [a brother-in-law] or yourself write, we shall receive the letter.

We hope that the day passed off in every way that you could wish after we left—and that the company departed with happy faces and kind wishes.

Eliza is very well and happy and sends her dear, dear love to you—father—Charles William [a brother]—and with the best wishes from my dear wife for your health and happiness, accept the same from

Yours very affectionately,
E. HODGSON.

"Dear Mother" was Mrs. William Boond. She had been Miss Hanna Clegg, and had lived at 44 Faulkner Street, Manchester. On the Boond side the family was of considerable importance in the locality. They were credited with being descendants of "The Boonds of Rostherne Mere" (Cheshire), and could be considered Cheshire Greys, of Groby. The Boond family goes back to Elizabeth Wyddeville, and Sir John Grey, of Groby, themselves, and can be traced, from Cheetham Hill (where "dear Edwin" and Eliza

first lived) to Rostherne Churchyard, Legh, and elsewhere, back and back, for generations.

But this is not all. A mythical branch of the ancestry was often referred to, albeit humorously, in family conversation—a line leading back to that dour Cadraad Haard, chieftain, who, in the barbarous ages, "sat in the Isles of Anglesey." He was supposed to come into the family through a connection with a Sir William Wynn, scion of a Welsh family of the loftiest and longest possible lineage. From this semihistoric Cadraad it could easily be considered that many interesting and highly creditable family and individual traits had descended.

As to "dear Edwin's" other gifts, they were sufficiently definite to add greatly to his social charm and acceptability.

He *wrote.* It is believed that he frequently "tried his hand" at poetry, and it is of record that, like many other worthy British citizens, he addressed "the papers" on subjects that could be appropriately discussed over such anonymity as "*Pro Bono Publico*," "Cives," or "Irate Citizen."

His talents along other lines, too, were amiable. His voice was a fine one, and had been sufficiently trained to assure any casual group of listeners an agreeable half-hour when he consented to perform, especially since he could accompany himself.

At the time of Frances' birth the Hodgson family fortunes were prospering, Mr. Hodgson being the head of a firm wholesaling art materials for houses—chandeliers, decorative iron work, brass door fittings, and similar hardware. Manchester was then a tremendously busy English manufacturing centre, its specialty being fine-to-medium cotton goods. Well-to-do manufacturers were erecting sumptuous houses, suited to their newly achieved stations and opulence.

This was the beginning of the era of interior decoration, and the Hodgson business ministered with success to this new interest.

So there was a time when the Hodgsons occupied a fine house in a most distinguished suburb of smoky Manchester, called "Seedly Grove." From that rather imposing mansion (of brick, it is said, and ensconced in trees) the family drove forth in a Victoria drawn by a "smashing pair."

When Frances was born, Herbert was about four years old; John George two years younger. Herbert was a typical English boy, but with a lurking interest in "artistic" things that came out strongly in later life. He had an abiding cheerfulness and a quizzical humor. And if Frances stood rather in awe of him as a "tease," it is more to be laid to the spirit of the age than to any individual iniquity. Later events proved him a real brother, ready and cheerfully willing to give his best efforts to make life happy and comfortable for his sisters.

John George, with whom fate did not deal kindly, though he figures in the story, appears always as an extremely vague character.

And then, about two years after Frances's own arrival, came Edith—sister Edith—"Edith Mary." Edith was destined to be something decidedly more than a younger sister; she was to be an Audience, an Inspiration, and a Comfort rolled into one.

Edwina was the last arrival, a belated and sorrowful one who never saw her father. She came another two years after Edith, and by that time "dear Edwin" had suffered a stroke of apoplexy, though still only thirty-eight years of age; and, in the year 1854, after an illness of several months, had passed on.

The prostrated mother, left with her four infant children, decided that she would continue "dear Edwin's" business, and started bravely to become a woman of affairs.

Alas! "Dear Edwin's" death proved to be only one of a series of catastrophes that were to make all of her efforts vain. The Manchester district drew most of its raw cotton from America—the Southern States—and Southern peace and prosperity meant low-priced raw material and well-being to the Manchester industries. When America plunged into a civil war, shipments of raw cotton became fewer and the price higher. Distress of the most dire kind fell upon Manchester mill-owners and operators; there were no fine houses being built, and no fine interior decorative materials being bought. "Dear Edwin's" business was therefore among the first to suffer.

So hard times came for the little family. The fine house in Seedly Grove was given up and a more modest place taken at Islington Square, a neighborhood of Manchester which had seen its best days.

Even before Frances had left Seedly Grove there is evidence that she had, as it were, burst her cocoon, and, spreading her wings, had become an Imagination.

It would be an interesting thing to speculate as to how much one could trust an Imagination's testimony about itself. Any attempt to estimate how *true* such testimony might be would probably lead to the world-old impasse—are things which *are* truer than those things which *seem?*

In what is essentially the biography—and to as large an extent as possible the *autobiography*—of an Imagination, the consideration of things that *are* as against things which, to the Imagination, *seemed* will be frequently a matter to be considerably taken note of. Often a failure to make the proper discrimination will mean failure correctly to understand events and the inevitable sequence of events.

But, after all, how futile and how unnecessary, to bring forth the commonly accepted thirty-six-inch yardstick in an attempt to measure a magic that proved often able, in a most remarkable and practical way, to transmute the

"seems" into the "ares," not only in story, but amid the hard facts of daily living; not only for its possessor, but ever joyously for others.

The Imagination began this process of transmuting the world in general very early. We have the record of the essential facts—or fancies—of her active-minded childhood in her own memoirs, the story which she wrote under the title of "The One I Knew the Best of All; Memories of the Mind of a Child."

To this volume, in which an Imagination plays upon an Imagination, the reader is referred for a full account of the childhood of "Frances, the Romantick," but some quotations will serve to enliven the present running account of the so-called "facts" of that childhood.

Frances remembered Seedly Grove, and in a chapter called "The Back Garden of Eden" she shows that she looked out upon it with beyond-seeing eyes. "The interesting feature of this domain," she reports, "was a wide flower-bed which curved round it and represented, to a Small Person, a stately jungle. It was filled with flowering shrubs and trees which bloomed, and one could walk beside them and look through the tangle of their branches and stems and imagine the things which might live among them and be concealed in their shadow. There were rose-bushes and lilac-bushes and rhododendrons, and there were laburnums and snowballs. Elephants and tigers might have lurked there, and there might have been fairies or gypsies, though I do not think her mind formulated distinctly anything more than an interesting suggestion of possibilities. . . .

"But the Back Garden was full of beautiful wonders. Was it always Spring or Summer there in that enchanted Garden which, out of a whole world, has remained throughout a lifetime the Garden of Eden? Was the sun *always*

shining? Later and more material experiences with the English climate leads me to imagine that it was not *always* flooded and warmed with sunshine, and filled with the scent of roses and mignonette and new-mown hay and apple-blossoms and strawberries all together, and that when one lay down on the grass on one's back one could not always see that high, high world of deep sweet blue with fleecy islets and mountains of snow drifting slowly by or seeming to be quite still—that world to which one seemed somehow to belong even more than to the earth, and which drew one upward with such visions of running over the white soft hills and springing, from island to little island, across the depths of blue which seemed a sea."

This threnodic chapter ends with an incident in which, having bought a "penny parkin" on trust, and having no means to discharge the tremendous liability incurred by purchasing this alluring eatable, she became, to herself, a deeply-dyed criminal, until Brother Herbert, in the guise of a Capitalist, and much in the self-sacrificing rôle he was to play in after life, discovering her trouble let her have the money to free herself from the ignominy of debt—and possibly the yawning jaws of jail!

The devious ways in which her Best Intentions were in this instance turned against her by Fate—and her well meaning feet lured into Paths of Crime—cannot be told in full here, but somehow the incident seems symbolical, and throws a strong light upon the ways of an Imagination, even when it is still in its babyhood.

Very early the Imagination began to seize upon life-material. A little further on we find this record:

"Whether as impression-creating and mind-moulding influences, Literature or the Doll came first into her life it would be most difficult to decide. But remembering the rôle the Doll played, and wherein its fascination lay, I see

that its way must have been paved for it in some rudimentary manner by Literature, though their clearly remembered existences seem to have begun at one and the same time.

". . . That was the truth of the matter—it was not a Doll, but a Heroine.

". . . When I recall the adventures through which the Dolls and the Small Person passed, the tragedies of emotion, the scenes of battle, murder and sudden death, I do not wonder that at times the sawdust burst forth from their calico cuticle in streams, and the Nursery floor was deluged with it. . . . The Doll who, on November 24th, begins a checkered career by mounting an untamed and untamable, fiercely prancing and snorting steed, which, while it strikes sparks from the earth it spurns with its disdainful hoofs, wears to the outward gaze the aspect of the mere arm of a Nursery Sofa covered with green baize—the Doll who begins life by mounting this steed, and so conquering its spirit that it responds to her touch and leaps the most appalling hedges and abysses, and leaves the lightning itself behind in its career; and having done this on the 24th, is executed in black velvet on the 25th as Mary Queen of Scots, besides being imprisoned in the Tower of London as someone else, and threatened with the rack and stake because she will not "recant" and become a Roman Catholic—a Doll with a career like this cannot be dull, though she may at periods be exhausted.

. . . And there was the substantial sober-looking Arm Chair—as sober and respectable as the Nursery Sofa, and covered with the same green stuff, and it could be transformed into a "bark" of any description from a pinnace to a gondola, a canoe, or a raft set afloat by the survivors of a sinking ship to drift for weeks upon 'the trackless ocean' without water or food."

As with the Doll, so with all other things that came within

her infant experience. She brought them alive, and made them dramatic figures in the stories that her childish brain even then was endlessly creating. Whether it was the Bible, supplying her imagination fuel through the story of the "Slaughter of the Innocents;" the poem of Alice (Ben Bolt) as recited by her nurse to suggest inexplicable sorrow; "Uncle Tom's Cabin," to set her flogging her own doll, which she had bound to the newell post; Scott and Harrison Ainsworth to start her re-enacting the tragedies of the beauties and royalties of English history, or Captain Mayne Reid, to send her under the parlor table with the cover pulled down to make it a "wigwam,"—all was food that stimulated her to endless "pretending" and "supposings."

Her little mind reached out eagerly to anything that had the slightest aspect of romance or story. Giving it inevitably a heightened color, derived largely from her own outlook, she took it to her and it became part of the world of make-believe she was creating as a reality about herself. In this world, throughout life, she dwelt.

CHAPTER II

ISLINGTON SQUARE

Education began with some sort of a nursery school or kindergarten, at Seedly Grove, conducted by the Misses Mary and Alice Hague. Recollection of it is extremely vague, beyond one important thing—the presentation to little Frances of her first *really own* book, "Granny's Wonderful Chair," "as a reward for politeness and good behavior." The donors said they had bought it hurriedly, thought it too frivolous for a school prize, and would change it later for Frances. The prospect of losing a "fairy book" which was all her own, almost brought the wee scholar to tears. She clasped the small volume eagerly to her breast, declaring she would not be separated from it. And, as a matter of fact, during a long life of intense literary activity, she never was so separated, for in one guise or another its influence was always upon her.

There were fascinating turns to the mystery that came to surround it. She read it so often and eagerly that she knew it almost by heart—then, when she was about eight years of age it disappeared, and could not be found or duplicated, even though kind friends scoured the old book-stores of two continents many times during the passage of years. One day, when she had herself become a famous writer, the editor of *St. Nicholas Magazine*, Mary Mapes Dodge, hearing how Mrs. Burnett was retelling the stories to children friends, suggested that she should set them down again for *St. Nicholas* readers, under some such title as "Stories from the Lost Fairy Book Retold by a Child Who Read Them." So her favorite, "The Story of Prince Fairy

Foot," was published, and another, "Sour and Civil," was on the way. Then, like magic, the "Lost Fairy Book" was found! An admirer from England sent Mrs. Burnett a copy of the original edition with its quaint, graceful illustrations. In course of time a new edition of the book was published, to which the grown-up Frances wrote a preface relating her childhood's connection with it.

Education in the Islington Square period was administered by three sisters, "The Hadfields." Their "Select Seminary" was conducted in a rather large house at one corner of The Square. Some young boys went to it as well as girls.

In the order of age, the sisters were named Miss Janey, Miss Alice and Miss Sara. They were, of course, maiden ladies with accomplishments, daughters of a widowed gentleman who was an artist, and therefore, to little Frances, a "romantic person."

In the school there were wooden "forms" for seats, and three "grades" were kept. The learning was largely by the memory method—a few sentences from this or that instruction book (such as "Pleasant Pages," a geography in disguise), being got by heart. The reciting consisted in parroting these pages off as correctly as possible.

Well remembered, as pleasant incidents of the school week, were the hours in which stories were read to the scholars; and the girls also enjoyed the afternoons which were devoted to sewing class. Most delightful of all were the Wednesday afternoons, given up to dancing class. This festivity, looked forward to the whole week, meant putting on daintily colored short frocks, and having a pleasant, active afternoon, with music, in the big room with all the "forms" cleared away. The "Square" boys were present, too—small gallants, uncannily clean, with slickly brushed hair.

That Frances obtained any real education is explained only by the fact that it is not possible to keep culture away from minds that respond to true, beautiful things. She did not get it from school. But she lived in surroundings that represented culture as it was understood in those days.

Her father had been a bookish man, and small Frances, sooner than most children, began to take advantage of her "literary surroundings." This brings us to the story of "The Secretaire," which provides one of the most illuminating chapters of "The One I Knew the Best of All."

"Until she was seven or eight years old she did not 'discover' the Secretaire. She knew it existed, of course, but she did not know what its values were. She used to look at its rows and rows of books and sigh, because she knew they were 'grown-up books' and she thought there was nothing in them which could interest her.

". . . Little girls did not revel in sumptuous libraries then. Books were birthday or Christmas presents, and were read and reread, and lent to other little girls as a great favor.

"The Small Person's chase after the Story was thought to assume the proportions of a crime.

"'Have you any books you could lend me?' she always ended by asking a new acquaintance.

" . . . It made her rude, too, and it was an awful thing to be rude! She was a well-mannered enough child, but when she went to play with a friend in a strange nursery, or sitting-room, how was it possible to resist just *looking* at a book lying on a table? Figure to yourself a beautiful, violently crimson, or purple, or green book, ornamented with gorgeous, flaring designs in gilt, and with a seductive title in gilt letters on the back, and imagine how it could be possible that it should not fill one's veins with fever."

But on one wet day, having exhausted the possibilities of The Doll, the Nursery Sofa, and the Green Arm Chair, by sheer ennui she was driven to look at the rows of ugly brown books in the Secretaire.

She brought a chair, climbed upon it, and then to the ledge of that book-case looking affair. Carefully she opened the glass doors and began to examine the volumes. There were *some* in lively bindings—"The Keepsake," "The Garland," "The Floral Tribute,"—but she became disgusted when she found that they were just moralizing pretexts for books. She was finally drawn to take down a dull looking volume of *Blackwood's Magazine*—and when she opened it, there was a story! She could tell it was a story because there were so many short lines. That meant conversation. She took down others, and found that they all contained "stories," many continued from month to month.

"There was a long story called "The Diary of a Physician," another called "Ten Thousand a Year,"—this last, she gathered in a few glances, contained the history of a person called Tittlebat Titmouse—and was about a beautiful Kate Aubrey, and her virtuous but unfortunate family—and about a certain Lady Cecilia—and, oh! the rapture of it!

"Her cheeks grew hotter and hotter, she read fast and furiously. She forgot that she was perched on the ledge, and that her legs dangled, and that she might fall. She was perched in Paradise—she had no legs—she could not fall. No one could fall from a Secretaire filled with books, which might all of them contain stories!"

Here the real lure of the story began—and as she passed through life, even to her very last hours, her relations toward "the book" changed scarcely a particle from the passionate pursuit characteristic of this hour of her childhood.

There is, however, one letter surviving from the Hadfield period, which shows how commonplace an uncommon Young Person could be made, under standard educational methods.

19 Islington Square,
June 4, 1862.

My dear Mother:

I hope you will let me go to Rhyl with Miss Emma on Whit Wednesday. If I may not go there, let me go to Blackpool with Lizzie Farrar and Ada Renshaw.

We break up next Friday and are going to have five weeks' holiday.

I hope it will be fine during Whit week so that you can take us to Miss Watson's to see the scholars walk.

I am going to write to cousin Lillie to-day. I am sorry you do not wish us to visit her this month. I am sure she will feel very lonely, as she does not know any one there.

I am glad to inform you that we are going to say no more lessons until after the holiday.

With kind love, I remain, my dear Mamma,

Your loving daughter,
Frances.

To: Mrs. Hodgson.

This proper little letter could have been written by the most ordinary-minded little early-Victorian school miss. One might attribute its inexpressiveness to the reserve that the early-Victorian attitude toward "The Young" commonly built up between parents and children; but "dear mamma" created no such barrier. She sensed in a true motherly way that little Frances needed a friendly atmosphere; and Frances could always be sure that any revelations of her cherished inner thinkings would get a loving and appreciative reception.

Reciprocating the understanding of Mamma, the daughter writes in "The One I Knew the Best of All":

"Was Mamma clever? I think not. The Small Person never asked herself the question. That would have been most sacrilegious unlovingness. And why should one have thought of asking more of her than that she should be 'Mamma?' One would not ask one's self if an Angel were clever. And, also, one did not think of wondering how many years she had lived. She was just the age of a mamma. Only as long as she lived her mind was like that of an innocent, serious, young girl—with a sort of maidenly matronliness. Not being at all given to eloquence or continuous conversation of any sort, it was a wonderful thing that her mere existence near one meant so much—that it smoothed stormy nursery seas, and removed the rankling sting of wrong and injustice. One could have confronted any trial, supported by the presence of this little, gentle, very ingenuous and unworldly Mamma. . . ."

. . . One grew up knowing that her unspoken creed would be:

"Be kind, my dear. Try not to be thoughtless of other people. Be very respectful to people who are old, and be polite to servants and good to people who are poor. Never be rude or vulgar. Remember to be always a little lady."

"It was all so simple and so quite within the bounds of what one could do. And, all summed up and weighed, the key-note of it was but one thing: 'Be kind, my dear—be kind.'"

Because of this feeling, Mamma was her natural confidante on the occasion of her first literary efforts. Left alone by the church-going family one Sunday night when she was nine years old, she amused herself by writing poetry such as she was reading in *Blackwood's*. "The First One" was something about church bells—bells, tells, sells, shells; ring, sing, fling, wing, and was shown to no one. The second, induced by the melancholy of the night silence in the house

some Sundays later, began most seriously with "Alone, alone, the wind seems to moan"—but refused to maintain the tragic strain. It took such a ludicrous turn, that, unabashed, she ran to Mamma with it.

"'I've got a piece of poetry,' said the Small Person. 'I want to read it to you and see if you don't think it's funny.'"

"She forgot to say anything about having written it herself. She was so full of it and so eager to try it on Mamma that it seemed unnecessary to say it was her own. Just warm from the writing of it, she took it for granted that it was all understood."

So she read, and Mamma was immensely amused; but when Mamma asked from where she had copied it, Frances realized that a confession was due.

"'I didn't get it from anywhere,' she hesitated. 'I thought you knew. I—I wrote it myself.'"

To Mamma, who had never herself thought of writing poetry, this seemed literally impossible, but when the scrawly manuscript with all its errors and corrections was shown in proof, she was "undisguisedly filled with delight and almost incredulous admiration."

"'Well, my dear,' she said, 'you have taken me by surprise, I must confess. I never thought of such a thing. It —why, it is so clever.' And she put her arms about the overwhelmed and ecstasized Small Person and kissed her."

Then, of course, in the way of education, there was music. Frances achieved some little facility as a pianist—enough to enable her to give music lessons at a later, even more stressful period. She also had a voice beyond the average, though this was never trained. In addition, the family as a whole made good use of such public institutions as the art gallery in Peel Park, and the museums and such like as were available, and this sums up the matter of educational advantages.

Childhood to Frances Hodgson was largely synonymous with Islington Square, since she arrived there when she was just out of her infancy, and remained there until well into adolescence. This is how she sets down her memories of it:

"It was one of those rather interesting places which one finds in all large English towns—places which have seen better days. They are only interesting on this account. Their early picturesqueness has usually been destroyed by the fact that a railroad has forced its way into their neighborhood, or factories, and their accompanying cottages for operatives, have sprung up around them. Both these things had happened to Islington Square, and only the fact that it was an enclosed space, shut in by a large and quite imposing iron gateway, aided it to retain its atmosphere of faded gentility.

" . . . In the centre of the Square was a Lamp-Post. I write it with capital letters because it was not an ordinary lamp-post. It was a very big one, and had a solid base of stone, which all the children thought had been put there for a seat. Four or five little girls could sit on it, and four or five little girls usually did when the day was fine."

And, inevitably, the little girls developed a sense of proprietorship in regard to that lamp-post, and would become outraged when they saw any one who was not a "Square girl" sitting on "our" lamp-post—a "street child" for instance.

That everything, even from the very first, was literary grist that came to her mill, is evident from Frances' attitude toward these "street children." She adored them and the dialect they spoke, and would often stray into forbidden back streets to lure a dirty factory child into conversation.

Impressions were already being made that were later to bring important results. One evening, looking out from

the drawing-room window, she saw a group of larger "Street children" gathered about the sacred Lamp-Post.

"They were half a dozen girls or more, most of them factory girls in print frocks, covered by the big coarse linen apron, which was tied all the way down the back to confine their skirts, and keep them from being caught by the machinery. They had no bonnets on, and they wore clogs on their feet. They were all the ordinary type of small factory girl—all but one.

". . . She was dressed exactly as they were—print frock, tied-back apron, clogs, and bare head, and she held a coarse blue worsted stocking, which she was knitting as she talked.

". . . The big one seemed a stately, self-contained creature who belonged to another world. Somehow she seemed strangely to suggest a story which one could not read, and of which one could not guess at the plot."

And while this Junoesque creature was standing there, there came reeling and cursing across the road toward her her drunken father, the kind of a man who quite commonly "punsed" or beat his women-folk into insensibility with his clogs, or in general, terrorized them. But this girl was not terrorized. She looked him straight in the brutal face and went on knitting.

"'Dom tha brazent impidence!' the Small Person heard him say once.

"But the girl walked calmly before him without a word or a hurried movement. She went on knitting the stocking until she turned the corner and disappeared for the last time from the Small Person's sympathetic gaze. She also disappeared from her life, for the little girl never saw her again.

"But she thought of her often and pondered her over, and felt her a power and a mystery. Not until she had given

some contemplative thought to various antique marbles, and had wondered 'What was the matter' with the Venus of Milo, did it dawn upon her mind that in this girl in the clogs and apron she had seen and been overpowered by Beauty such as goddesses were worshipped for, and strength such as should belong to one who ruled. She always wanted to know what happened afterward, but there was no end to the story that she ever saw. So it was that some years later she wrote a beginning, a middle, and an end herself. She made the factory operative a Pit Girl, and she called her Joan Lowrie."

Jokes and laughter could always be counted upon when Frances was about. She was popular among the select Islingtoners, who gathered about the Lamp Post. One of the Square Boys, who became an officer in the American Navy, half a century later, writing from a naval station in China, bears this testimony:

"Yesterday, a dear shipmate of mine showed me a picture of 'Frances Hodgson Burnett,' which was coupled with the announcement that the lady would begin a new story in an early number of *McClure's Magazine*, an incident which stirred my memory a deal today and I have crossed a long bridge, lying fully forty years behind me, to a time when I knew a little lady dressed in short muslin frock and velvet tippet, whose face was attractive and interesting always, as I remember it, with a red-lipped, sensitive mouth, pretty inquisitive eyes, and head crowned with an abundance of rich auburn hair, worn in long, thick curls. I think she attended Miss Hadfield's school. She was a very exclusive young lady, having many admirers; and, among those of her own sex, there existed considerable rivalry to listen to the charming stories which, so the boy 'animals' were informed in confidence, she could tell very effectively even in those far-off days. . . ."

She did have admirers. Recollection credits Marmaduke Mudieman as having been for the longest time her accredited "Sweetheart." With such a name, he had at least one thing to endear him to the romantic young lady—the "Marmaduke." It is said that as a boy he was fat and faithful, but otherwise not inspiring. Her conquests were, however, by no means restricted to the males of her own age, and her heart, if she engaged it at all in those tender years, sought more mature objects.

The name connected with what was probably the closest to a real heart episode in those adolescent days—and even this association seems to have been based more on literature and intellect than on sentiment—was "William Henry" (William Henry Ball), a young man who lived in Islington Square, and either purposely or inadvertently passed by the Hodgson house every day, going to and from his employment. Gradually between him and the bright-eyed, auburn-curled little girl there grew up an acquaintance. She discovered that he had read books, and that made him indeed a magic person to her. He was willing to discuss books with her—and that made the spell about him all the more marvellous. He must have been a very sensitive and understanding person, since he left upon the growing mind of this imaginative child an impression which was wholesome and lasting. He aroused in her an admiration that was akin to adoration, and yet, not touched with anything sentimental or mawkish.

The friendship lasted during the latter part of the Islington Square period, and giving her as it did, opportunities for exchange of real literary opinions, and the expression of her ideas and ideals, was in those most impressionable years a formative influence of much importance.

CHAPTER III

FIRST STEPS OF A STORY TELLER

As we have already seen, Frances started out as a poet, and throughout life, by literary avocation, so to speak, she was always a poet. When she had something particularly poignant or apt, or even especially amusing to express, she instinctively turned to verse.

From the childhood period the few manuscript relics are in poetry form. They are illuminating, more as showing literary and humorous tendencies than for any achievement of technique. The earliest bears the notation, "Composed by Fannie E. Hodgson at the age of twelve." It indicates that, in the upper forms of the Misses Hadfield's "Select Seminary" the young ladies were made adept in classical allusion through contact with Lemprière's "Classical Dictionary."

"King Jove had given a dinner,
To his courtiers handsome and bold,
And as his friend, Bacchus, had sat by his side,
He took too much wine, I am told.

For such a sweet Goddess attended him,
So brightly bewitching and clever,
A sort of compound of Venus,
Aurora, Clyte, and Minerva.

And Bacchus had musically observed,
Tho' at first he professed to be shy,
That Jove was a jolly, good fellow,
Which nobody could deny."

And so on, through a half dozen verses, giving a picture

of Juno, arriving and becoming irate over the spendthrift conviviality of her spouse, the poem concluding:

"At first she thought she'd box his ears,
And then she thought she wouldn't,
For, looking down upon her hands,
She concluded she really couldn't.

For she wore a delicate, rose-tinged glove,
A *Jouvin* of celestial fame,
For according to Lemprière, Goddesses
Are on earth and in Heaven much the same."

A second bit of poetic memorabilia has a more homely and intimate trend. It is *vers d'occasion*, as her later poetic effusions frequently were, and the inspiration was a trip taken by Frances and a group of girl friends to see the illuminations in Peel Park and elsewhere on the occasion of the marriage of Prince Edward, March 10, 1863, she being then about fourteen. These verses were sent to her cousin, Emily White, who evidently was unable to be of the jolly party.

THE ILLUMINATIONS

My dear Emily White—did you see the sight?
On that day of joy to our Nation.
Did you go into town and see Feathers and Crown
On the night of the Illumination?

We went in a cart, which I assure you looked smart
On that day of joy to our Nation.
There were blossoms and "favours" near the hearts of young "shavers"
On the night of the Illumination.

We nearly got "*teemed*", oh, how Carrie Boond *screamed!*
In that vast deal of conglomeration.
Our charger so fleet rushed down a back street
On the night of the Illumination.

The poem closes:

"Some very fine day I will step up your way,
At least, if to it you agree.
With two tales I've been writing, full of murders and fighting—
So I hope you'll be glad to see me."

These verses picture a fun-loving little person with a well developed sense of humor. Frances must, in fact, have been something of a puzzle to the mid-Victorian adults who surrounded her, but she went her gay way, unrebuked, and not charged so far as it can be discovered, with being a hoyden, or anything similarly disgraceful.

"With two tales I've been writing,
Full of murders and fighting,"

says the poem to Emily White, and that brings us to the real secret sin of this period of Frances' career—romance writing and telling. Let us have the confession in her own words, as given in the chapter "Edith Somerville," of "The One I Knew Best of All." She speaks first of the normal way in which she accepted her mother's appreciation of her poem, "Alone," and then goes on:

"It was possibly, however, a piece of good fortune for her that her first effort had not been a source of discouragement to her. If it had been, it is likely that she would have done nothing more, and so would not have spent her early years in unconscious training, which later enabled her to make an honest livelihood.

"As it was, though she wrote no more poetry, she began to scribble on slates and in old account-books thrilling scenes from the dramas acted with the Doll. It was very exciting to write them down, and they looked very beautiful when written—particularly if the slate pencil was sharp—but the difficulty was to get a whole scene on to a

slate. They had a habit of not fitting, and then it was awkward. And it happened so frequently that just at the most exciting point one's pencil would reach the very last line that could be crowded in and strike against the frame in the middle of a scene—even in the middle of a sentence."

She found it extremely difficult to get paper. Her chief recourse was old butcher's books, captured when discarded by the cook with perhaps a few unused pages—resulting in such combinations as the following:

". . . Sir Marmaduke turned his anguished eyes upon her and cried in heart-wrung tones, 'Ethelberta, my darling, Oh, that it should be so.' Onions 1d. Shoulder of mutton 10s."

She writes feelingly of her heroines:

". . . My memory of them is that they were extremely like the inspirations of the *Young Ladies Halfpenny*. The heroines had the catalogued list of charms which was indispensable in the *Journal* type of literature. One went over them carefully and left nothing out. One did not say in an indefinite, slipshod manner that Cecile was a blonde. One entered into detail and described what she 'had' in the way of graces. 'She had a straight, delicate nose, large, pellucid violet eyes, slender, arched eyebrows, lashes which swept her softly rounded, rose-tinted cheek, a mouth like Cupid's bow, a brow of ivory on which azure veins meandered, pink ears like ocean shells, a throat like alabaster, shoulders like marble, a waist which one might span, soft fair arms, snowy, tapering, dimped hands, and the tiniest feet in the world. She wore a filmy white robe, confined at her slender waist by a girdle of pearl and gold, and her luxuriant golden tresses were wreathed with snowdrops.'"

And then follows her account of how the first "telling" began—with "Edith Somerville." It was during one of

the embroidery afternoons at school, when low-toned conversation or story telling was permitted. The supply of standard tales having run out, even from Frances' memory, her little girl neighbor urged her to tell "something," and she recklessly volunteered to tell one "out of her own head," admitting that she sometimes wrote them.

"'Why—' gasped Kate. 'Why—you're an Auth'ress—like Charles Dickens.'"

"'No, I'm not,' said the Small Person, a little crossly, because somehow she felt rather ridiculous and pretentious. 'I'm not. Of course, that's different. I just make them up. It isn't a bit hard.'"

". . . And so began the first chapter of 'Edith Somerville.' It may have been the Small Person's liberality in the matter of the golden-brown hair, her lavishness as to features and complexion, and the depth and size of the violet eyes which fascinated her hearer. Suffice it to say she was bound as by a spell. She edged closer and closer and hung upon the words of the story-teller breathlessly

". . . The Small Person became excited herself. She was not limited by a slate-frame and she had the stimulus of an enraptured audience. She 'told' 'Edith Somerville' all the afternoon, and when she left the school-room told some more at the front gate. It was not finished when they parted. It was not a story to be finished in an afternoon. It was continued at all sorts of times and in all sorts of places. Kate allowed no opportunity or the ghost of one to slip by."

Concerning the very first completed story she says:

". . . There came a time when some windfall gave into her possession an exercise-book which was almost entirely unused. She wrote her first complete story in it. . . . Its title was 'Frank Ellsworth, or Bachelors' Buttons.' There was nothing whatever in it which had any connection with

buttons, but the hero was a bachelor. He was twenty-two, and had raven hair, and, rendered firm by the passage of years of vast experience, had decided that nothing earthly would induce him to unite himself in matrimony. . . . The discriminating reader knew that in the next page would loom up the Edith Somerville of the occasion . . . and that, after pages of abject weakness, he would fall at her feet in a condition which could only be described as drivelling. My impression is that the story contained no evidence whatever of intelligence. But it was not at intelligence that the Small Person was aiming. She was only telling a story."

There are also records of other early stories—"Millicent's Romance," and "Celeste, or Fortune's Wheel," the latter complete and kept until the family went to America.

So, as she was slipping through the first years of her 'teens, we find her well along in her journey into her world of make-believe; the centre of an admiring crowd of girl school-mates, and looked upon with curiosity and some admiration by the boys of her own circle, albeit chaffed by them. But she seems to have been by no means spoiled or vain, even though at this time she was more than ordinarily pretty in a poignant, regular featured way. Her ideals of beauty did not include a high brow and aquilinish nose, grey-green eyes and reddish hair, and therefore her own looks did not seem to possess romantic possibilities.

She was, however, fairly conscious even at this time that she should make the most of what she had, and early developed an interest in clothes. A silk dress was the longed for ideal of her childhood. History does not say why she was never granted a gorgeous garment of this kind—but she was not. However, her imagination was not to be defeated, and just as her heroines rode on "white palfreys" or "night-black steeds," and her heroes were "gorgeously caparisoned in rich brocades," so she "decked

herself in silks"—and by her individual process of turning the "seems" into the "ares" made her best party dress into silk. She always referred to it as "my silk dress," and seemed always oblivious to the fact that, however pretty it actually was, it was of commoner material.

And there is no evidence that any one made serious attempts to deny her this pleasing little make-believe. That was a situation characteristic of her life—her fictions were always so pleasant, usually so much a matter of herself alone, that few ever thought of disturbing them, or had the unkindness to try.

CHAPTER IV

A NEW WORLD

What has been recounted of the Islington Square days gives a pleasant picture of a growing girl amid happy surroundings. But there was another side, one fortunately not much remembered or commented on in after life. A time of real privations came.

The Civil War in America was indeed a disaster to Manchester business. "The One I Knew the Best of All" records:

"It seemed to her that, for years and years, everyone seemed to live, more or less, under the shadow of a cloud spoken of as 'the War in America.' This was probably felt more in the cotton manufacturing centres than anywhere else. Lancashire was the great country of cotton factories. Manchester was the very High Alter of the God Cotton.

"'. . . If the war in America does not end,' it began to be said at one time, 'there will be no more cotton, and the manufacturers will not know what to do.'"

And as to its direct effect upon the life of the Hodgsons:

"Even Mamma began to look harassed and anxious. She had neither a factory nor a warehouse, but she also had her difficulties and losses. Poor gentle and guileless little lady, she was all unfit to contend with a harsh, sharp, sordid world. She had tried to be business-like and practical, because, poor Papa being gone, there were three little girls to be taken care of and the boys to be given a career in life. Sometimes the Small Person found her at her dressing-table taking off her little black bonnet with gentle

trembling hands and with tears in the blue eyes 'Poor Papa' had thought like Amy Robsart's and Jeanie Dean's."

Poor Mamma could not work financial miracles. The establishment of E. Hodgson had been sold out, and the rather large family dependent upon the income from the pitiful proceeds, was forced to take an even smaller house on Gore Street.

In many ways Manchester people had close personal connections with America, especially the South. What more natural than that Manchester families here and there should have relatives who were actually living in the country which Frances saw as the land of magnolia groves, negro slaves, white-clad Evas, and Simon Legrees?

The Hodgson family had one such relative. Uncle William Boond had gone across the water before the war to try his luck and had settled in Knoxville, Tennessee. The family had heard from him occasionally but his fortunes could hardly be classed as permanently thriving. Still, he was a picturesque figure, out there in the American wilds, and the boys, especially, were highly excited by every communication from him.

Therefore, the family atmosphere burst into a flame of approval when a letter was received suggesting that they all come to America. It appeared that Uncle William had achieved a temporary stability of fortune and that the future looked promising. He was the owner of a dry-goods store in Knoxville, and the town, with the cessation of the war, promised to "boom" as was a recognized habit with American towns. There would be places in the store for the boys, and everything would be lovely.

They set sail on the *Moravian*, in the late spring of 1865. The journey across the Atlantic consumed three weeks, landing the party at Levis, in Canada, near Quebec. Here they stayed for some days, but in about two weeks, after a

tedious land journey, the family found themselves at a "curious little village—one unpaved street of wooden houses, some painted white and some made of logs, but with trees everywhere, and forests and hills shutting it from the world,"—Knoxville, Uncle William's home.

To Frances it was the "trees everywhere" that was most important. The change for her to the new world at this particular time was undoubtedly a critical influence in her life. It was good for the imagination, giving it plenty of room to grow in, and leaving it unfettered by the conventions of an old civilization, and the mincing round of social activities in a provincial English town.

There had always been in her an adoration of nature and growing things. In "The One I Knew the Best of All" she tells, in the chapter of "Dryad Days," how she was thrilled by the discovery of a flower actually growing and blooming in a deserted Islington Square back garden. About this new world home she says:

"Because she was really a Dryad she felt no strangeness in the great change in her life. It seemed as if she must always have lived with the vast clear space of blue above her, with hundreds of miles of forests surrounding her, with hills on every side, with that view of a certain far-off purple mountain behind which the sun set after it had painted such splendors in the sky. To get up at sunrise and go out into the exquisite freshness and scent of earth and leaves, to wander through the green aisles of tall, broad-leaved, dew-wet Indian corn, whose field sloped upward behind the house to the chestnut tree which stood just outside the rail fence one climbed over on the side of the hill, to climb the hill and wander into the woods where one gathered things, and sniffed the air like some little wild animal, to inhale the odor of warm pines and cedars and fresh damp mould, and pungent aromatic things in the tall 'Sage

grass,'— . . . strange as it may seem, to do, to feel, to see and hear all this was somehow not new to her. . . . She lived in the woods, and she wrote stories on slates and pieces of paper. But the Story took a new tone. Sir Marmaduke Maxwelton was less prominent, and the hair of Edith Somerville flowed less freely over the pages. Hair and eyes seemed less satisfying and less necessary. She began to deal with emotions. She found emotions interesting—and forests and Autumn leaves assisted them and seemed part of them somehow, as she was part of the forests themselves. In the Square she had imagined—in the forests she began to feel."

Uncle William's generous offer to take them all in and help the family to a new start in life in the new world turned out to be a little more than he could accomplish along the lines he had first planned. The department store was not going ahead quite as rapidly as he had expected, but that did not seriously disturb him, since he had already interested himself in another hopeful venture, a grist-mill at Dandridge, some thirty-odd miles from Knoxville.

The problem of a crowded household and the mill were solved by the same expedient. Twenty-five miles east from Knoxville by rail was a little town called New Market, and in it was a small log-cabin-like structure upon which Uncle William had some sort of claim. It had a fairly tight roof, a fire-place and chimney, windows and doors, an up-stairs and a down-stairs. It could be made habitable, and had the further advantage of being within a few miles of the Uncle William grist-mill, where it was proposed to put the young John George in charge. Herbert, being older and more capable, was retained by Uncle William for further service in the Knoxville store.

The house was indeed a most elementary expression of the idea of shelter, but it was all that could be provided

at the time. Every one was grateful to Uncle William for doing what he could, and all set to work to make the best of the situation.

It certainly did not quell the spirits of Frances—to her it was "larks"—and through whatever privation the arrangement produced for a brief space, the spice of adventure, and her vision of the romance and the picturesqueness of it, kept her free from any sense of hardship.

But there was a difference between New Market and Seedly Grove. New Market in early 1865, when Frances first came to the log cabin, was hardly New, and not much of a Market. It was merely a foothills village, terribly ravaged by the war. Soldiers of both armies were still in evidence, and the majority of the town's male populace were wearing the uniforms they had brought from camp.

One of the most important parts of the day's schedule of entertainment to the young folks of New Market was going to the "Depot" morning and afternoon to watch the single daily train, each way, come through. And Frances remembered—and used to recount with a vivid sense of the picture and the humor of it—how, on one of her first days a most unkempt, unshaven, Union Private, leered a toothless smile out of the car window at the bevy of pretty girls laughing on the platform, and pointing to his prison-clipped bald head said, as the train moved slowly off, "Say, gals, don't you want a flock o' my har?" Here was primitive American humor, and the aftermath of a great nation's tragedy placed vividly before her young mind.

That New Market once had been something, was evidenced by a brick academy of fair size on the side of the hill up which the back streets of the town straggled. It represented a fine period of Colonial architecture, but it was now in a state of dilapidation. The short, main street

A humming bird darted in through the window

THE LITTLE LOG CABIN, NEW MARKET

Here the Hodgson family spent its first winter in America and here Fannie Hodgson held school in the upper story. The quotation, in Mrs. Burnett's handwriting, is from "The One I Knew the Best of All."

paralleled a small, winding stream—a "crik." Two or three general stores were spotted along this street, with a tan yard at one end, and a blacksmith at the other. There were churches, one at each end, Baptist and Methodist, and a few houses varying from squalid to pretentious.

The people of New Market had real humanity and generosity, and they took this strange and actually needy family to their hearts. Of course, these English folk were "different," but they were in trouble, and so each person in the village strove to do what he could, and to the credit of the Hodgsons it must be said that though *different*, they never showed themselves "superior."

The whole situation was incongruous. Here was this "gentle" family of a quietly distinguished mother and group of "delicately bred" daughters from a conservative English town, occupying the most forlorn dwelling in the village. On the other hand, in a community where shoes and even undergarments were not always possible, they appeared with the neatest of sprigged muslin dresses, white stockings, ankle-strap shoes, and the tidiest of hair bound by gay-colored ribbons—and yet again, it was known that most of the time they did not have half enough to eat. The secret lay in the fact that Dear Mamma, in selling out her belongings, had taken good care of the children's wardrobes, and had also brought with her several barrels of treasured household effects. So, in the queer little house, with its bare board floors, there were clean white curtains, and on the rough table fine napery and shining silver, even though there was rarely a generous supply of food.

Herbert and John were the bread winners, but their earnings scarcely went beyond keeping themselves alive and clothed. John came down from the mill once a week, and he usually brought corn meal, hominy, bacon, and molasses, part, probably, of the stock provisions provided

for the mill hands. With only this, the family fare would have been terribly scant and rough.

That was why Mrs. Jenkins, for example, from "down the road a piece," would occasionally appear at the little log cabin carrying a large plate covered with a clean napkin, and bashfully talk with the gentle and dignified lady inside, something like this:

"How'dy, Mrs. Hogson. How be ye?—and all yer prutty gals. I—jus' passin' by.—Ben a'makin' some biskits this mawnin'.—Kinder new recipee, and I thought you and yer gals might like ter taste 'em,"—and she would uncover a "taste" of delicious *white* flour "biskits" spread over the plate—two rows deep. Primitive tact!—but whose feelings could be hurt by such a heart proffering, even though the method was crude?

Or it might be that the Peterses, on one of the nearby farms, had had a slaughtering of pigs. A few days after the important event Bill Peters would be found at the door of the log cabin, passin' the time o' day with Mis' Hogson, and when he left there would be in the Hodgson larder some fine fresh cuts of choice fat pork to help out the very slim assortment of eatables purchased from the store.

Food for the mind, and food for the soul was in not much more generous supply than the actual bread and meat. New Market's general ideas on education, books, and culture were limited, and the number of people even able to read, write, and do arithmetic in the after-war period was small.

But there were exceptions. Across a short intervening lot lived Doctor John M. Burnett, the district surgeon and general medico, then about fifty years of age, and a man of considerable property. His house, sizeable and white painted, stood a little back from the street and had several large trees shading the flower-bordered brick walk leading

up to the front porch. Behind, there were a good many acres of farm, including barns and paddock for the white mules, June and Jenny, which the doctor rode in his daily and nightly sallies against disease and disaster.

Doctor Burnett was a reader of books, and, as the young girl soon found, a person in whom books stirred up ideas, and this made him a desirable person to talk to. The contact with the doctor, much occupied with his ministrations to the sick over a wide territory, never developed an intimacy, but it did provide something that kept a vital part of her mental processes alive. The doctor's wife, Lydia Peck Burnett, was known as a very careful, even rigorous, housewife. Though she came of a prosperous Southern family, there was something of primness in her that suggested a throwback to some distant Puritan or New England ancestor. She was known as Aunt Lyddy Ann, and though something of a disciplinarian, withal, was kindly hearted. Certainly, her heart went out in the most neighborly and practical way to the needy English family that fate had placed next to her.

And then there was young Swan Burnett. He was perhaps a year or so older than Frances, a quiet, studious young fellow, with a fine head and poetic eyes, who was preparing to follow in his father's footsteps. When a boy of eleven or twelve he had stuck a penknife by accident in his knee, and the wound, becoming infected, left the knee permanently bent, so that he always walked with a decided limp.

Between Frances and this young man there naturally sprang up a friendship, fostered by proximity and a mutual interest in books. Moreover, to help this particular matter along, there were in the Burnett family three girls—Joe, Ann, and May. The girls of the two families soon became close intimates, with a natural effect upon the association between Swan and Frances.

The summer and autumn days of this first year passed quickly, with but little sense of shadow. But with the coming of winter, the unhappy facts of the family situation could not help but be felt more. Frances, however, was gathering maturity, and feeling her responsibility. She had accomplishments, and she cast about as to how to make capital of them. She knew something of piano playing, so she gave a few music lessons, and received her pay in kind, that is, in eggs, butter, meal, and other produce. It was this probably which suggested to her something a little more elaborate in the way of teaching.

She set up a school. It was a primitive and small one, and the pupils were of tender years. There was plenty of need for the simple kind of teaching Frances—the gay Frances—was competent to do. There were perhaps eight or ten barefoot youngsters who enrolled themselves when Miss Hodgson's own "Select Seminary for Young People" opened in late 1865, to continue its successful career for—one winter. The tuition fees, again calculated in terms of meal, bacon, eggs, milk, bread, etc., provided food for mother and sisters, and thus early Frances began her job as the laboring woman of the family.

This life very definitely had its compensations and made its contributions. Probably during the winter months she had more time to pursue her "secret sin" of story writing. With less of opportunity, and possibly less appreciative audiences for telling stories (although Edith was always a most complete and satisfactory audience all in herself) she was turned more to writing to satisfy her creative desires. In an article written for the *Youth's Companion*, after achieving her first successes,—one of a series on the subject, "How I Served My Apprenticeship," she says of this particular period:

"I saw a new, though primitive, people. I studied them

because it was my natural bent to delight in human beings, and study them without being aware that I was doing so. Not until after I was twenty did I find out that during those years spent among the woods and mountains of East Tennessee I had been accumulating material out of which I could build and from which I should draw as long as I lived.

"I do not mean that it was merely East Tennessee material, or character, or dialect; it was *human* material, which is the same, with shades of difference, in all regions of earth. . . . A child born with a vivid imagination found it fed by every hour that passed, every curious or interesting human creature she spoke to or looked at, every book, every hill or tree, storm or flower. Nobody regarded her as any thing but one of many. She did not regard herself as any thing but one of all the rest, but she was 'serving her time.'"

The school teaching was certainly not much of a drain upon her abounding energies, and there was plenty of time and spirit left for her romancing. The only problem was the scarcity of paper, and that turned out to be quite a fateful matter.

CHAPTER V

HARNESSING AN IMAGINATION TO THE PLOW

The New Market days came to an end. Uncle William's business having petered out, Herbert found employment at fairly good wages with Knoxville's leading jeweler, named Wood, and was in a better position to take care of the family. A small frame house was found, a mile or so from town, on the Clinton Pike, and although entailing two long walks daily for Herbert, to and from his place of business, it offered many attractions to the Hodgson family, especially after the winter's privations in the log cabin. It was a complete little house, with an ell for the kitchen, a porch, and above all, a fine view out toward the mountains. Being a tubby kind of structure with a pointed roof, standing alone by itself on the slope near the brow of a hill, it was dubbed by Frances "Noah's Ark," and so it always remained in memory and story.

If there was any wrench in the departure from New Market, it was undoubtedly on the side of Swan. Swan Burnett, born March 16, 1847 at New Market, was of one of the best families of the neighborhood, tracing back to Hugenot settlers who were among the first of the persecuted clan to arrive in Charleston, South Carolina. His mother was justly proud of belonging to the Pecks, who claimed descent from the General Nathaniel Greene who assembled the Southern Continentals that defeated the British in the engagement that decided the campaign in the South.

Young Swan got his education at the New Market Academy, under a man of splendid character and scholastic attainments, Samuel P. Johnson. Johnson loved the classics

and all beauty, and seemed able to transmit a passion for culture to his pupils—at least young Swan's spirit caught fire from his enthusiasm, and burned with a flame that did not flicker or fail during a long life.

Swan had few books, but a strong taste for reading, so he delved in his father's library and early became an enthusiastic student of medicine. The old doctor's practice, especially after the war, paid but poorly; for the most part he found himself, in charity, serving the desperate need of those who had nothing besides their disease and suffering. So there was little to put aside for Swan's medical education after the family bacon and grits had been provided, and enough corn had been put in the crib for the mules, June and Jenny. The doctor was "land poor."

Young Swan, nevertheless, attended the Miami Medical College at Cincinnati, Ohio, eking out his small stipend by writing for the newspapers. There his attention was directed to the eye and ear as worthwhile specialties, and he began the studies that led up to his eventual reputation in those lines. This college study came in the period just after Frances had left New Market, and probably to some extent softened the regret of his separation from her.

Knoxville, being decidedly more of a town than New Market was a village, provided families of considerably more culture and refinement. The Hodgson home became a centre of social gatherings, with evenings of bantering young-folk-talk, some music, and always wherever Frances was, much cause for laughter.

Day times, out doors at Mount Ararat (on whose sides, of course, the Noah's Ark stood) were wonderful to her. They were the peak of those adolescent Dryad Days—when she surrendered herself to a passionate and imaginative enjoyment of nature. Not far from the house was a thicket she called her "Bower." She describes at some

length in "The One I Knew the Best of All," the wonderful mornings that she spent there, lying "in the gold-green shade quite motionless, with her eyes closed; a curious, rapt fancy in her mind.

"Somehow," she used to think, "I am not quite in my body. It is so beautiful that my soul is trying to get away like a bird. It has got out of my body and it is trying to break loose; but it is fastened with a little slender cord, and that holds it. It is fluttering and straining because it wants to fly."

But one could not remain a Dryad always. Eventually, a Dryad had to return to a home and bed, and inside Noah's Ark there were realities connected with food and clothing that had to be faced. The Imagination viewed it thus:

"We are decayed ladies and gentlemen," the Small Person used to say to herself. "We ought to be living in a ruined feudal castle and have ancient servitors who refuse to leave us and will not take any wages. But it is not at all like that."

As the eldest of the girls, and much the most mature and practical, Frances became seriously concerned over the family's finances. She felt she must do something, but teaching school at Mount Ararat seemed out of the question as an immediate resource.

She talked over the problem with Edith. Then she suddenly found herself started, if not precisely on her literary career, at least upon the work of writing for a living. She was then barely seventeen years old. She has told, in "The One I Knew the Best of All," about the queer little attic room with unfinished walls and rafters, where she had a table by the window and wrote stories, and where a little cat named Dora, also a Small Person, always followed her and often curled up on her left arm. But the idea of putting her stories to practical use came, oddly enough, from

the "Answers to Correspondents," in the final pages of *Godey's Lady's Book*, *Peterson's*, and other magazines—things like these

"Elaine the Fair.—Your story has merit, but is not quite suited to our columns. *Never* write on both sides of your paper."

"Christabel.—We do not return rejected manuscript unless stamps are enclosed for postage."

"Blair of Athol.—We accept your poem, 'The Knight's Token,' Shall be glad to hear from you again."

She was reading these absorbing replies one day, she tells us, when a thought floated through her mind, that made her blush a little at first, "because it had such an air of boldness."

"I wonder how much they pay for the stories in magazines," she said, reflectively, to Edith. . . . "Do you think —do you *think* it would be silly to send one of my stories—to a magazine—and see if they would take it?" . . . "Even if they are not good enough to be published it would not do any harm just to try. They can only be sent back—and then I should know. Do you think we dare do it?"

"If I were you I would," said Edith.

"I believe," hesitated the Small Person. "I do believe I will."

There was a story that she had begun in Islington Square, and she found the old copy books in which she had written scenes. She began to tell it to Edith, and they both got excited over it and decided it should be finished.

"But there is one thing," she said. "I would not have The Boys know for anything in the world." The Boys had always good-naturedly chaffed their sister about her writings, and what they might think about Frances having the audacity to send a story to a real magazine, and espe-

cially how they might laugh and joke if it was refused, was a matter of the direst importance to the self respect of the Small Person. There were, therefore, two problems now before the two young lady conspirators: getting the story written without anyone's finding out, and, obtaining money to purchase the requisite "ordinary foolscap paper" and stamps enough for return postage.

The first object was achieved in full, with the exception that Dear Mamma was taken into confidence, and "was lovable and sustaining as usual." To Frances the most important point was that, if the story should be accepted, it must be paid for. A third problem arose in the matter of getting this point clearly, but not offensively before the Editor. She reasoned most practically:

"Then, as to the letter I send with it, I must be very careful about that. Of course, they have a great many such letters and they must be tired reading them. So I must make it very short. I would send it without a letter, but I must make them understand that I want it sent back if they don't like it, and call their attention to the stamps and let them know I am doing it for money and not just for the fun of getting the story published."

"How will you tell them that?" asked Edith, a trifle alarmed. It seemed so appalling and indelicate to explain to an Editor that you wanted money.

". . . I shall have to think that over," she said, seriously. "I don't want to offend them, of course, but I *must* tell them that!"

All ways of earning money for stamps and paper were gone over; embroidery, music lessons, raising chickens, etc. Then, one day, Edwina, the youngest, came into the room and revealed that Aunt Cynthy's two mulatto girls had picked a gallon of wild grapes on a nearby hill and sold them *for a dollar!*

"Edith," exclaimed the Small Person. "Edith!" A brilliant idea had come to her. She felt her cheeks grow hot.

"Suppose," she said, "suppose *we* went and gathered some—a whole lot—and suppose we gave the girls part of the money to sell them for us in the market—perhaps we should get enough to buy the stamps and paper."

It seemed an inspiration of the gods.

So, an expedition, all gaiety and hopefulness, was arranged to gather grapes. The mulatto girls went along.

"The Small Person had never been less sober. . . . She built her palaces that day, and furnished them, and *lived* in them, as she searched for her wild grapes. They were innocent palaces, and small ones, for she was a very young and vague thing; but they were things of light and love and beauty, and filled with diaphanous forms of the beliefs and dreams only such young palaces can hold.

The party went home at sunset with its tin pails full to the brim and covered with fresh vine-leaves."

Thus the problem of paper and postage was solved, and with care and nicety the story was copied. There was much prayerful thought, much deep debate over the fateful letter to accompany the manuscript. Here it is:

Sir: I enclose stamps for the return of the accompanying MS, "Miss Desbrough's Difficulties," if you do not find it suitable for publication in your magazine. My object is remuneration.

Yours respectfully, F. Hodgson.

CHAPTER VI

APPRENTICESHIP AND JOURNEYMAN DAYS

And because her "object was remuneration" she did a thing astounding in a beginner—she asked for the return of her first offering.

Rather amusing round-about methods had been devised for receiving the manuscript back without any of the family knowing. A friend in Knoxville *loaned* his address and agreed to keep the young conspirators informed promptly of the arrival of any mail. And mail did arrive; not a bulky package, but a letter, which was excitedly torn open and read. This letter presented a problem. It neither accepted nor rejected the manuscript. It commented on the length of the story and made one or two minor criticisms. In all it seemed a letter of approval, but it did not say anything about *remuneration.*

After considering for a while, the Small Person decided in some way the tone of the letter was influenced by this matter of remuneration. She was mystified, and after thinking about the matter for several days she wrote and asked to have the story returned.

Courage, however, was much higher than before. At least, the first Editor had not considered her story bad; so it was promptly forwarded to another Editor—this time to *Godey's Lady's Book.* The second waiting was even more exciting than the first. But finally, another letter!

"Sir" (They were immensely edified at being called Sir.) Your story, "Miss Desborough's Difficulties," is so distinctly English that our reader is not sure of its having been written by an American. We see that the name given us

for the address is not that of the writer. (The Samaritan friend had lent his name, that the mail might evade the Boys.) Will you kindly inform us if the story is original? "Yours, truly, etc."

Frances, of course, replied by the next mail, saying, "The story is original. I am English myself, and have been only a short time in America."

The Editor countered, "Before we decide will you send us another story?"

"The Small Person went up to the raftered room positively trembling with joy and excitement. The Editor did not believe she had written her own story. He would not believe it until she wrote another. He would see! She would show him!

The little cat lay curled up in her arm for three days, seeming lulled by the endless scratching of the pen. She said nothing, but perhaps in some occult feline way she was assisting. The Small Person's cheek blazed hotter and hotter. She felt as if she were running a race for life or death. But she was not tired. She was strung up to the highest and intensest pitch. The Story was good to her. . . . In three days the new story was finished. It was shorter than "Miss Desborough," but she knew it was as good, and that the Editor would see it was written by the same hand. But she made it an American story without a touch of English coloring.

. . . It might have been arranged by Fortune that she should get the fullest, finest flavor of it. When the answer came they were passing through one of "the Family's Downs." That was their manner of describing the periods when everything seemed at its worst. . . . Standing by a table in the bare little room, the Small Person opened it with quivering hands, while Mamma and Edith looked tremblingly on.

She read it, rather weakly, aloud:

"Sir: We have decided to accept your two stories, and enclose payment. Fifteen dollars for 'Aces or Clubs', and twenty dollars for 'Miss Desborough's Difficulties.' We shall be glad to hear from you again. Yours, truly, etc."

And to make the situation more like a story book or play, —at this point in walked one of the much feared, teasing, scornful Boys. Overcome with a sudden and unaccountable shyness, the Successful Authoress confessed her crime to him after she had taken him out on the porch.

He took the check, looked at it and then, like a good English male, remarked, "Well, by jove, that's first class, isn't it? By jove!"

The autobiographer is incorrect as to the names. The stories were "Hearts and Diamonds," and "Miss Carruther's Engagement." "Hearts and Diamonds" was published in June, 1868, and "Miss Carruther's Engagement" in October.

A faculty that could so easily earn thirty-five dollars for the family exchequer would not—could not—allow itself to "repose idly upon the luxurious cushions of accomplishment." Consideration of others being a guiding characteristic of the owner's makeup, she would of course feel obliged to set talent promptly to work to relieve the distresses of her family. This was her idea of duty. But there was another side to the situation. Among the yellowed papers surviving from those early writing days are a couple of pages from what must have been a rather long letter to Swan Burnett (whom she was then calling "Jerome"). It is written with a fine pen in her clear, clean cut, though angular hand, and gives a curiously accurate record of what was going on in the mind of this Small Person. It dates somewhat later than the acceptance of this first story.

MY DEAR JEROME:

. . . There is a very strong feeling deep in my heart, telling me that something must be done to raise us all a little from the dust, and the very strength of that feeling lies in the fact that I am *sure, sure, sure* I must do it. You have no need to smile. Nobody else will do it, because nobody else cares a cent whether we drag through our wretched lives as shabby, genteel beggars, or not. We are not shabby, genteel beggars, says Bert, when I fire up a little—but we *are* shabby, genteel beggars, I say. We are not respectable people in our own eyes, whatever we may be in any one elses. I would as soon be a thief as feel like one, and I do feel like one. . . .

Respectability doesn't only mean food and a house—it means pretty, graceful things; a front street *not* close to the gas works; an occasional new book to provide against mental starvation; a chance to see the world; a piano and fifteen cents spending money (not to be squandered recklessly of course). "Man cannot live by bread alone," said the minister to his drunken old parishioner. "No," said the apt non-convert, "He mun hae' a few wedgetables," which is my opinion. What I want is a "few wedgetables."

What is there to feed my poor, little, busy brain in this useless, weary, threadbare life? I can't eat my own heart forever. I can't write things that are worth reading if I never see things which are worth seeing, or speak to people who are worth hearing. I cannot weave silk if I see nothing but calico—calico—calico. It is all calico, it seems to me. Ah, me! Ah, me! see what a tangled skein of thread for one poor little woman to unwind.

Most that has been given so far pictures a gay, sweetly imaginative little person, Dryad-ing and romancing, whatever might be the situation or the subject. This letter

shows there was another person—in the background but highly important never the less—an intense little person who was feeling the hard corners of her experience keenly. Being an Imagination, she was viewing those experiences in their strongest light, unconsciously thinking of them in terms of drama, and thus not sparing herself one atom of such pathos as there might be in the event.

That is the obvious penalty, of course, of being an Imagination. If you see people or occurrences, or landscapes, with such vividness that they become real to others as the ink slips from your pen to paper, you see yourself and all that happens to you with equal or even greater vividness. If you high-light life as a whole, so that the commonplaces become dramatic enough to be made into a story, can it be wondered at, if your own picture of your own mind gets "out of drawing," or acquires a tone that is somewhat above the natural color scale?—if occasionally you want to "end it all?"

Revealing her inward rebellion at the drab life forced on her by the family's comparative poverty, this letter gives a side-light important at the beginning of the more serious part of our story. The concrete point Frances brings out is that she feels she must take upon herself the family responsibilities.

After about two years Noah's Ark was given up, and the family moved into Knoxville proper. The move seemed justified, for Herbert had begun to prosper, along with Woods, the jeweler; and Frances, who had settled down to the steady grind of earning with her pen, was probably adding her share to the family stipend. A rather roomy, but dilapidated brick house with a back yard running down to the Tennessee River, became the family homestead. As "Vagabondia Castle" it became the very center of an enthusiastic group of youngsters who were glad to think of

DR. SWAN M. BURNETT
At about 25 years of age.

themselves as Bohemians; and this was not all pose, for most of them had but little money, not too much food, and barely enough clothing. There were Pleasant Fahnestock and Frank Bridges, cronies of Herbert's, who were almost enough at home in the ramshackle brick house to claim that they lived there; Fred Boond, a cousin, and a little later on, what was most important to Frances, Swan Burnett.

Swan had finished his studies and served his apprenticeship with his father. Only once or twice had he had the opportunity of visiting the gay family at Noah's Ark. But when the Tennessee State Guards were called out in January, 1869, to suppress the first Ku Klux Klans, he managed to get the appointment to take charge of the State Guards' Hospital in Knoxville. So, for a brief time he was a member of the Bohemian crew. But, saving considerable of his pay as a hospital superintendent, he found himself able in the fall, to go to New York, where he studied for more than a year at the well-known Bellevue Hospital Medical College, further specializing in the study of the eye and ear.

Life in Vagabondia Castle, however, went on with uninterrupted hilarity. Herbert played the piano; so did Frances. She sang; so did Edith. Frank Bridges was more than an expert performer on the flute; Fred Boond played the bass viol, and Charles Haynes came in to play the violin. Pleasant Fahnestock made at least a good listener, and was a "beginner" on the clarinet, occasionally invited into the ensemble.

And then, there was boating on the river, in the back yard —so convenient! It was Pleas Fahnestock who started that, for the entertainment of Edith. There was, too, considerable of that small town social life which is made up of picnics, church socials, Sunday afternoon "calls" by the younger folk, and dancing entertainments often rising to the dignity of "balls;" not to overlook "candy pulls"

and "parties" in which "clap in and clap out," "pillow" and "drop the handkerchief" were still included.

Whether Frances' early visions of making the family immensely rich by her writings were being realized or not, she was finding a ready market for her "produce." That she was a good workman, is proved by the fact that her manuscripts were quite regularly accepted.

Even in those earliest days of her writing, her method was to mint her own environment into the currency of her story, a process she carried into her most mature works. What she saw, what she did, what happened around her; all this was fused by her imagination, and the gold of it, the shining romance of it, the drama or tragedy of it, the character and color of it slipped almost unconsciously into whatever she might be writing. "Vagabondia," her first serial story, published in *Peterson's Magazine* as "Dorothea" in 1873 (later in a book as "Dolly;" then republished as "Vagabondia"); is a good illustration of this practice. What she was experiencing day by day in the little Southern town of Knoxville, however, she transliterated into terms of English provincial life, that being her most congenial story atmosphere. The affairs of the little brick house backing up to the Tennessee River are written all over this first fledgling novel. At the beginning is this picture:

"It was a nondescript sort of a room, taking it altogether. A big, sunny room, whose once handsome papering and cornicing had grown dingy, and whose rich carpeting had lost its color and pile in places, and yet asserted its superiority to its surroundings with an air of lost grandeur in every shabby medallion. There were pictures in abundance on the walls, and more than one of them were gems in their way, despite the evidence all bore of being the work of amateurs. The tables were carved elaborately, and the faded, brocaded chairs were of the order *pouf*, and as invit-

ing as they were disreputable in appearance; there was manuscript music among the general litter, a guitar hung from the wall by a tarnished blue and silver ribbon, and violin lay on the piano; and yet, notwithstanding the air of free-and-easy disorder, one could hardly help recognizing a sort of vagabond comfort and luxury in the Bohemian surroundings. It was so very evident that the owners must enjoy life in an easy, light-hearted, though perhaps light-headed fashion; and it was also very evident that their light hearts and light heads rose above their knowledge of their light purses."

And through all the characters of the romance can be seen the faces, thinly disguised, of most of the frequenters of the real Bohemia.

Frances' stories were paid for in checks running from ten to twenty-five dollars. In the article written for the *Youth's Companion* under the title "How I Served My Apprenticeship" she says, after recounting how her first stories were accepted:

"From that time I wrote stories continually. . . . I sent them principally to fashion magazines which published stories. . . . In those days I believe I had stories published in every magazine in America, except *Harper's*, *Scribner's*, the *Atlantic*, and such as classed with them. To them I was not sufficiently certain of my powers to send anything. It would have seemed to me a kind of presumption to aspire to entering the world of actual literature. When I wanted to pay a visit to my relatives in England I used to write five or six little ten or twelve dollar stories a month, with a view to accumulating the money I required."

She soon found a most helpful friend in Charles J. Peterson, owner and editor of *Peterson's Ladies' Magazine*, and though his publication contained fashion-plates and cooking recipes, he himself had the literary and cultivated mind.

"Other editors were kind enough to praise my work when they accepted it, but I did not find that their admiration caused them to add to the size of their checks of payment.

". . . Mr. Charles Peterson began by paying me as the rest did, but after I had sent him a few stories he wrote me a letter I could not easily forget. . . . He told me that my work was worth more to him than that of his other contributors, and that this being the case, he felt it only fair that he should pay me more than he paid them. And he sent me a check which was almost double what I had received before.

". . . This was only the initial act of a series of most generous kindnesses. I was so young and so unprotected by any worldly knowledge, and he protected me against my own simplicity. This is not a small thing or a common one, heaven knows; and when I am asked who encouraged me, I know that this one man—this one honorable and generous gentleman—did."

Mr. Peterson went to the extreme in befriending the young writer. When the stories he received were, in his judgment, worth more than he could pay, he sold them, in her behalf, to richer magazines. His ability to sell her better stories to literary magazines gradually increased her faith in herself, and really led to her first actual success. She says, in this Apprenticeship article:

"It was just before I returned to England for the first time that I wrote a story in the Lancashire dialect, 'Surly Tim's Trouble,' and somehow it so broke my heart as I wrote it, and I found myself to sobbing and weeping, that I could not help thinking that at last I had written something I might offer to one of the higher-class magazines.

"I sent it to *Scribner's Monthly*, which was then edited by Doctor Holland, and the letter written accepting it

THE TITLE-PAGE OF THE DECEMBER, 1872, "PETERSON'S MAGAZINE"

Reading from left up and around, the portraits are: C. J. Peterson, the editor; Mariette Holley, Fannie Hodgson, Ann Stephens, Daisy Ventnor, C. J. Cate, F. L. Benedict.

proved to me that it was all and more than I dared to hope."

From then on she wrote for the better periodicals entirely, and found that "it was not necessary to write six stories a month when she wanted to cross the Atlantic." She says:

"If one's apprenticeship can ever be said to be ended, I think mine came to a close after the publication of the little sorrowful Lancashire story, 'Surly Tim's Trouble.'"

There was a little prelude to the acceptance of "Surly Tim" by *Scribner's* (after 1881 *The Century Magazine*). Frances had sent them a story with the title, "The Woman Who Saved Me," and received this reply from the assistant editor:

Scribner's Monthly,
654 Broadway, New York.
October 3, 1871.

F. Hodgson, or Dr. Burnett:
(which is the writer of it?)

The story of "The Woman Who Saved Me" is declined on account of its length. It would make nearly 16 of our pages—which is too much for a "short story," and we don't want any more serials.

Who are you? You write with a practiced hand—and we shall always be glad to hear from you. Stories should not be more than eight or ten pages in length.

R. W. Gilder.

Doctor Burnett was, it appears, acting as her amanuensis. She was evidently again being suspected of not having written her own story, and though it seemed strange to her that the editorial staff of *Scribner's* should know nothing of a young writer who had contributed so much to other periodicals, she accepted the implied challenge with spirit, and "Surly Tim" was the result.

CHAPTER VII

THE LITERARY WORLD HEARS FROM EAST TENNESSEE

The letter that brought the good news of the acceptance of "Surly Tim" was signed "Watson Gilder." It ran:

My dear Miss Hodgson: New York, Feb. 23, 1872.

Dr. Holland, and Dr. Holland's daughter (Miss Annie) and Dr. Holland's right-hand man (myself) have all wept sore over "Surly Tim." Hope to weep again over mss from you. Very sincerely and tearfully,

With it reached out from the editorial sanctum of that famous monthly a hand of friendship that for many years with affection and gentleness steadied the literary footsteps of the young authoress, giving a sympathetic support that many times brought strength to the drooping wings of her inspiration.

Frances, though ordinarily buoyant in spirits, did have her periods of real depression. She rarely made them a burden upon those around her, but she had them to fight in her own consciousness. She was sound as a trivet physically, and able to endure more than the average young woman. But, being an Imagination, and seeing herself quite vividly as the wage-earner of the family, she was often betrayed into a sort of desperateness about her writing that took heavy toll of her physical resources. This fact is brought out here because it is in a great degree the explanation of the many physical bedevilments which interferred with her work, and above which she rose only through

a leonine courage and a rare philosophy. Of all the struggles in her life, the fight against the imp of illness was the greatest. That antagonist was persistent. He was never far away, and it is one of the marvels of her long years of writing that her pen was so unvarying in its message of joy, happiness, hope, and belief in good.

As a counterbalance, she was surrounded from the beginning with love and sympathy. One old friend, writing what she recalls of her early days says, "I well remember the little house on the hill. We could see the river from the back door. She must have been doing her first work, as she was quite young at the time; and the other girls, that is, the sisters, said, 'Be quiet, and don't go upstairs, for Frances is writing.' Then we slipped away."

"Dear Mamma" died on March 17, 1870, leaving Frances as the foster-mother of the family, and, to a large extent, the bread-winner.

"Surly Tim" created a real stir, and in literary circles people began to take account of the name—Fannie Hodgson. The type of stories she was writing at this time can be indicated by quoting a few scenes from "The Woman Who Saved Me," published in *Scribner's* of March, 1873. It opened as follows:

"The medical man was holding my wrist and talking, and I was not listening. In the first place, I knew more about myself than he could tell me; in the second, I should scarcely have understood what he was saying if I had listened; and in the third, I was in so listless and indifferent a condition of mind that I did not care to listen."

The sick woman, Gervase, is the wife of Robert Leith, and she begins to listen when she grasps that the medical man is trying to tell her that she must leave London at once, preferably for the seaside—otherwise she will be dead within ten months. The husband, it seems, has al-

ready been told and has left the decision to her; he hopes "the change will improve her health."

"I looked out at the leaves in the street again. It was so like him. I knew what it meant. I must decide for myself. He did not care. I might live if I cared for life—die if I chose.

"I have a friend in Bamborough," I said after a while, "I will go there."

Lisbeth Grant, happily married, with joyous, healthy children, is the friend, and with her as a foil, a picture is given of Gervase eating her heart out because she thinks her husband does not love her—because her child died at birth and she feels her three-years old marriage has been a failure. Then enters Ralph Gwynne, an old lover, who takes advantage of her unhappiness and her separation from her husband; his machinations leading up to a scene, in which he attempts to arouse a suspicion in her mind that her husband is the father of an illegitimate child.

Ralph persuades her to consent to run away with him, but at the last moment she is saved from the irretrievable step by Lisbeth. She is prostrated by illness, and learns, as she is nursed back to consciousness by her friend, the lie Gwynne has tried to foist upon her, and the true inwardness of her husband's love. The final scene runs:

"And at length I found myself awake again, far into the night, and this time my eyes fell first upon my husband seated at my bedside, and when I made an effort to speak I found strength enough to utter a single word:

"Lisbeth."

He brought her to my side with a gesture, and as he turned towards the light his haggard face was a wonder to me; but I had only power, when Lisbeth bent over to me, to say to her one thing, in a whisper so weak that I scarcely could hear it myself.

"If I live," I said, "he must know. If—I die, it—cannot matter. Let him love—me—if he will."

The weak tears began to roll down my cheeks, and I could not stop their flow, and I saw that Lisbeth's tears were falling too.

"You will not die," she said, "you will live to retrieve the past. He knows all—he read your letter. Roger, speak to her."

He laid his haggard face near mine upon the pillow, and the old glow of our bridal days was in his eyes.

"You shall not die," he said, "you cannot die—you are mine—I love you. I have followed you down to the valley of death, and brought you back, and I claim you, as God is merciful. I have loved you through all our misery, but I was not fit to understand your woman's heart. The blame was mine, not yours."

". . . He loved me—he had loved me always, though he had tortured himself with the belief that my love for him had died. He was unlike most men, as I was unlike most women; he could not speak in common words of what lay so deeply locked in his heart. But tortured as he was, he had hoped as I never hoped. . . ."

The strength and the expressiveness of this little story lie in the deft touches by which the varying mental moods of the chief character are indicated, and the sense of the on-moving of the story maintained.

That it was a "story of married life" differentiated it from most stories of the period—dealing as they usually did with situations which ended the moment the wedding bells were heard in the distance.

The real literary success of "Surly Tim" and the entrée thereby gained to the higher-class magazines had its effect. Frances commenced to think beyond the narrow limits of her East Tennessee surroundings. Her contacts with edi-

tors in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia gave her more self-assurance as she measured her thinking and her wit with theirs, and she naturally felt a desire to spread her wings in an atmosphere more stimulating than she could find even among those who loved,—actually adored her—in Knoxville. Therefore, with the first hope of having money enough, came the decision to go back to England for a visit. There were still close relatives in Manchester, and they all had had news of the success of their childhoods' "story teller."

One person, at least, found the task of being enthusiastic over this proposed journey quite difficult—the poetic-eyed Swan Burnett. The plan drove him to a frequent use of a characteristic gesture; the running of his slim fingers through his long, black-brown hair. Swan had finished his medical course in Bellevue, and returning to Knoxville, had taken a little office on Gay Street, where he had started in to specialize on the eye and ear. Also, he had been made superintendent of a local hospital.

It was not long, however, before Swan was at once the most happy and the most desperate of young men. He had Fannie's promise to marry him; therefore, delirium of joy for the present; but as she was determined to go abroad, his soul was harassed by visions of English Dukes and Earls and glittering European army officers surrounding the most brilliant, the prettiest and the most captivating girl in the world, and ready to go to any lengths to win her away from him. Swan had something of an imagination too, and actually despaired of her returning to him heartwhole.

Frances left Knoxville for New York in the Spring of 1872. Her first contact with literary America—as represented by New York, with *Scribner's* office as a center—appears to have been something of a triumph, and all the more so because she made her entry with such a sincere modesty, and seemed so unworldly and inexperienced.

Scribner's Monthly, later to become *The Century*, was at that time laying the foundations of its greatness.

Doctor J. G. Holland, the editor, was an important figure in American letters. His fame had been chiefly obtained through the success of his "Timothy Titcomb," but he was also a popular novelist, poet, lecturer, and had been editor for many years of *The Springfield Republican*.

Doctor Holland's colleagues in the ownership were Roswell Smith and the elder Charles Scribner. They were building up the famous staff which later carried the magazine to its great success. Richard Watson Gilder had been a newspaper man, and then editor of *Hours at Home*, a smaller magazine also published by Scribner's. As a writer of verse he was already recognized as one of the leaders of the younger set of American poets.

Robert Underwood Johnson was assistant editor, and Mary Mapes Dodge was just beginning her great lifework as editor of *St. Nicholas Magazine* for boys and girls.

Doctor Holland was extremely kind to the girlish authoress, and the friendship with the Holland family soon became a very warm one.

No one ever denied that Fannie Hodgson was comely. At this time, just reaching womanhood, she had a plump, rounded figure, and a half-jaunty, erect carriage that, with her somewhat airy manner of carrying her head, became almost a challenge to masculine admiration. And, however straightened the family circumstances, it had rarely been denied that Frances was becomingly dressed. So it can be surmised that for her arrival in New York she had planned a really fetching toilette—and one not savoring too much of the styles of Knoxville, Tennessee.

R. W. Gilder immediately took her under his care, and the letter friendship quickly ripened into a personal relation of the most sincere kind.

That he keenly felt his responsibility for this little girl

from Tennessee is shown by a story frequently told of this few days' visit to New York. It appears that, as Fannie Hodgson had been contributing to her magazine, a woman editor, finding that she was in town, evinced an active social interest in her. At the time, this lady was considered "advanced" in her thinking by the conservative *Scribner* group. Quite early on one of the precious few days of Fannie's stay in New York, this editress descended upon her and bore her off. When, at a mid-morning hour, young R. W. Gilder, representing *Scribner's*, arrived at the hotel to pay his respects, he found her gone—and, horror upon horrors, under the wing of the aforesaid lady! A second call at midday disclosed that the errant young woman had not returned; another at mid-afternoon had the same result; the same report at dinner time produced actual dismay. When, at the conventional time for retiring, Gilder arrived again at the hotel and found no news of Miss Hodgson, he decided that duty required him to wait, and wait he did until the gay young Miss came laughing in with her escort—after midnight! What ever kindly advice or warnings he gave her she doubtless took in good part, as she always received suggestions from him throughout their long, enduring friendship.

Frances landed in England late in the spring of 1872. Her original plans were not laid for a long stay across the water; yet the visit extended to more than a year, much to the despair of the raven-haired young lover left behind in Knoxville.

And though she went away for a rest, she did not lay down her busy pen. She put the finishing touches on "Dolly" and the story, "The Woman Who Saved Me" was revised during this first English visit. The following letter in relation to the latter, written from the Boond home in Manchester, shows that the esteem of the young authoress

FANNIE HODGSON
at the time of her first visit to New York.

MRS. BURNETT
Photograph taken in Washington about 1880.

for the young editor had been steadily growing—despite intervening waters:

Wednesday, November 27. 1872.

My dear Mr. Gilder:

The money for "The Woman Who Saved Me" came on the 25th—the "duplicate" arriving first, according to date. Many thanks.

And I am so glad you like the story. It is nicer to know that than to have the hundred dollars, though a hundred dollars is a thing one can scarcely have any conscientious objections to.

Mr. Alden, of *Harper's*, liked the last story I sent him very much. He was good enough to say I had a brilliant career before me. When the story is published, "One Quiet Episode," will you please read it and then tell me if *you* like it.

You are my only solid representative of the great guild of editors and critics. I don't know any of the rest yet as I *do* know you, so what you say seems real. I am so glad I saw you when I was in New York.

"How is the "Old Cabinet?" I should so like to see something more of it. As to the laurels and bays, I hope they will remain green and flourish forever.

Yours sincerely yours,

Fannie Hodgson.

The "Old Cabinet" was Gilder's own department of casual essays in *Scribner's*.

As the letter indicates, she had already well begun her relations with *Harper's Magazine*. Her output during these fifteen months more or less in England must have been considerable. Stories from her pen were appearing almost monthly in *Scribner's*, *Harper's*, *Peterson's*, *Leslie's* or *Godey's*.

Meanwhile, there were ties tugging her back to Knoxville, not altogether represented by sisters and brothers. Swan's letters were by this time naturally imploring to the verge of desperation. His fate was safe, however, if he had only known it. Though there were other contenders in the field, both in England and America, the troth of France had been plighted to him. It was a real troth and his faithfulness and patience were to be rewarded.

CHAPTER VIII

WEDDING BELLS

Frances, when she returned in the late summer of 1873, with fresh laurels upon her brow, had an exultant and joyous reception from sisters and friends in Knoxville. Swan could not be gainsaid, and she had hardly arrived in Knoxville before he had persuaded her to "name the day." It was decided that the wedding should take place in the Burnett family home in New Market, the nearest approach that circumstances allowed to the Ancestral Halls required by Romance. September 19, 1873, was the date. But, as plans were being made, a most distressing hitch presented itself. The wedding dress which she with sly prevision had ordered of an European modiste had not arrived. To even an ordinary bride-to-be, the wedding dress would be an important feature of the event. To Frances it was a dominating element, and her "fairy story" for herself had been that she would have such a bridal gown as could only be devised by minds and put together by fingers across the water—by Paris its very self. She did not bring it in her trunks—it was to be packed with special precaution, and sent after. It was delayed, day after day, and so, too, was the final decision on the wedding plans. At the last moment it was agreed to have the marriage on the day originally set, and a few intimates from the neighborhood were hastily invited to join the family. There *was* a wedding dress. It was a cream and brown satin affair, and no doubt a fine garment, but by no means the frilly, lacey snow-white creation in which a bride should appear at the high moment of her career.

The disappointment was survived, however, and the wedding went its way, with its tears and its laughters, and its toasts to the bride's health. Under the eyes of the dear old doctor, and his prim but pleased gray-haired wife, Swan and Frances were "made one."

Life was taken seriously by both of them. Frances realized that she was a facile writer of conventional, romantic tales, of the type then finding a market in the English and American magazines. They were being accepted; more were being sought wherever she sent one; but she knew their deficiencies, and estimated them as what they were—"pot boilers." Even "Dorothea," in which she essayed novel form, was simply an extended story of the same sort.

Her visit to New York and her stay in England had led her to re-assay her powers. She began to be conscious of her responsibility as the guardian of a gift, and she felt she could, and should, write stories and novels that would measure up to the highest standards.

And to this resolve Swan was an enthusiastic seconder. He was now called Doro. Because of her inexpertness in domestic matters, he had likened her to Dora in "David Copperfield." She had countered by calling him Doro. Fannie, it can be imagined, would not be easily reconciled to such a name as Swan, and to make the situation of nomenclature as distressing as possible, the young man had been christened with the middle name of Moses. "Swan Moses" was quite a bitter dose for a person who was accustomed to invent daily for the heroes in her own stories such names as Ralph Gwynne, Hugo Montmorency, Gerold Chandos, Phil Tremaine. So Doro it became—which proved to be a name into which much affection could be poured, as occasion required.

Doro also had serious views of his future. He was

earnestly engaged in specializing on the treatment of the eye and ear. But in Knoxville the opportunities for clinical experience were few. He looked forward longingly to having some study in Europe, particularly with the specialists in refraction and eye surgery in Paris.

Although, from the financial needs of the day she was still obliged to write short stories, Fannie soon found herself in the grip of something much bigger than anything she had yet attempted—a real novel. "The Junoesque Factory Girl," whom she had years before seen berated by her father in Islington Square, came to life in her imagination as the heroine of a story in the "Pit" district of Yorkshire, to be called "That Lass o' Lowrie's." That friendly hand reaching out from the office of *Scribner's Monthly*, no doubt had its part in the stirring up and directing of that story. Unfortunately, no letters between Mr. Gilder and herself at this particular period, have survived; but what she wrote in *The Century Magazine* just after his death, gives so clear an idea of the whole relation of editor to author that it should be quoted here:

"I was a girl when I first met Mr. Gilder, passing through New York on my way to England. . . . What I recall most clearly is that he was then—at twenty-six or seven years of age—exactly what he was when we talked together the last time we met, a few months ago. He was the embodiment of the power to make one glad, to render elate one's imagination with the ecstatic knowledge that here was one who *saw* at once in all things all that one had seen one's self in one's most enraptured moment of appreciation and comprehension. . . . I could imagine no pleasure more keen to one born with the story-telling habit than to sit and tell a growing story to Richard Gilder, led on and on by the mere luring gleam in the extraordinary eyes no one who knew him well will ever forget. . . . On my part, I have

felt through all the years of our friendship a singular nearness to it—that intense, delightful, and delighting life and living. I feel it still. I always shall. So will each one of those who found themselves treading the Great Highway when this beautiful, finely kind, and buoyant soul passed singing by."

And then, sweetest of all sweet experiences, she was about to become a mother. It is a grievous lack in this biography that it can offer no record in her own words of just how The Imagination approached this great event. Only those who, in after years, saw her hover with an exquisite tenderness over pink-flannelled new arrivals could glimpse what might have been the intensity and the glory of this experience to her. Moreover, when she began to be able to write what she most liked to write, she gave the world child-story after child-story of exquisite feeling and understanding. It can be well imagined what it meant to her to be an "expectant mother."

So a period came in which most of her time was taken up with the delicious activities connected with an infant's wardrobe—the careful sewing of many little tucks in fine lawn, the fastening of many yards of lace. The wardrobe of the King of the Household should be worthy of him, and she was lavish in her time, her efforts and her expenditures of his honor.

He was her own and greatest Fairy Story—her First Born to be. The Imagination brooded over this with inward ecstasy, and with long visions into the future; with radiant hopes and perhaps some fleeting fears. Lionel was born in Knoxville, September 20, 1874, in a little house on Temperance Hill. He was the child of really poor parents, notwithstanding the sumptuousness of his befrilled, be-tucked, and be-laced layette.

For a short period after their marriage, Doro and Frances

had lived in New Market, with the Burnetts, but they had moved back to Knoxville before Lionel was born. An old friend, Mamie B. Foust, writing to Mrs. Burnett in later years, recalled this period:

"The one vivid picture that my memory holds of you is that of a very radiant and lovely young woman, clad in a most bewildering white gown, descending the stairway. With a backward glance over your shoulder you are laughing up into the face of your adoring husband, who is gallantly carrying the wonderful train of that most wonderful gown. You were going to some evening party, and somehow I have the impression that you were wearing for the first time the gown in which you were to have been married. Was it not imported, and did it not arrive too late for the wedding?"

So, the naughty wedding gown did arrive, after all—but a second tragedy attended its arrival. Obeying instructions to pack it very carefully, in view of its voyage across the sea, the dressmaker wrapped the delicate creation in tin foil, with the result that it was terribly stained, and could not be unpacked without tearing it. From the letter given above, it is evident that Frances, with her clever fingers, was able to rescue it, at least in part.

The work on "That Lass o' Lowrie's" progressed rapidly. It was, however, to be a really big book, in conception and purpose. There is every indication that it was written with heart-searching care and much re-casting. Evidently it was accepted on the presentation of the first chapters, and scheduled to begin as a serial in August of 1876. This was important for it meant not only a considerable amount of money, but also the fulfilment of cherished plans for Europe. And just here stepped in another person—a Fairy-story maker in truth, if not so ardent and persistent a one as the subject of this biography.

Charles J. Peterson, already referred to as a helpful friend, became an enthusiastic champion of this proposed trip. He agreed to underwrite it; he would advance to the couple one hundred dollars a month, and would take stories from Mrs. Burnett in repayment of the loan. In this way was the glorious possibility made a reality, and in early 1875, with Lionel not much over six months of age, and a typical old negro nurse, called Mammy Prissy, the journey across the water was made. Manchester, London, Rotterdam, Utrecht, Dusseldorf, and Rome were on the itinerary.

The little family eventually found itself in rooms on the "second floor back" of a small house, 3 rue Pauquet, in Paris. With Mammy Prissy to minister the household, and alternately to terrify and delight the adjacent natives, they set out to make the most of their opportunities.

Doro enrolled himself for eye and ear courses in the medical colleges of Paris. Frances was busy absorbing continental romance and atmosphere, and she had her obligations to Mr. Peterson, as well as commissions from *Scribner's* and *Harper's*. For the latter magazine she finished "Nobody but Jane Rossiter," which appeared in the May *Harper's* of 1875, and "Notwithstanding," which came out in February, 1877. There were also the proofs to be read of the big serial, "That Lass o' Lowrie's."

Writing proved, however, not her only occupation. "The Little Calamity" intruded himself. Son Vivian decided to come into the world. It was truly most inconvenient that, after she had everything so well arranged for a broadening and educative trip, and looked forward to roving over the whole Continent, her plans should be upset by a mere matter of vital statistics. The name, "Little Calamity," was the family's form of protest against the seeming high-handed methods of Nature.

Vivian was born in Paris, 3 rue Pauquet, on April 5,

1876, and in "How Fauntleroy Occurred" Mrs. Burnett has told something about it.

The new child was previsioned as a girl, and it was an added disappointment that it was a boy. Vivien had been chosen as a properly poetic name to go along with Lionel, but there was no boy's name ready. As a result of some emergency thinking, "Cecil" was decided upon. An American friend in Paris, Blanche Whitwell, calling to see the new baby, was told of the choice, and promptly threw up her hands in horror! "What," she said, "and have him called 'Sissy' all his life?" On deliberation, it appeared that Vivian, spelled with an "a" was, in English, a perfectly good name for a man, *vide* "Vivian Grey," the novel by Disraeli—and so Vivian it became.

After the arrival of Vivian, it seemed wiser to return to America. So when he was between three and four months old, Doro and Frances left their beloved Paris and journeyed back to East Tennessee. They went first to grandfather Burnett's house.

Whatever resources they had when they went abroad were entirely depleted, including, probably, advance payments on "That Lass." Doro's practice had, of course, been abandoned when he left Knoxville, and evidently the small stream of returns from Frances' shorter stories was temporarily choked off. With the family increased to two children, and needing a nurse, financial outlook was extremely gloomy, and it was lucky indeed that Swan could go back for a while to his family. Frances, despite the necessity of continuous writing, did spend a great deal of time with her babies. Even if there had been money to buy "store" clothes for them, her sense of mother-love required that it should clothe its offspring in "fine linen," and in obedience to this ideal she spent many, many hours sewing "fine seams" for Lionel and Vivian.

Even in those early days she was thinking very keenly about the artistic values in her work. With Gilder she was wrestling out the pros and cons of conventionality and originality. She wrote, when proof-reading the final chapters of the serial of "That Lass:"

New Market.

DEAR MR. GILDER:

. . . If you are sure it will be best all round, leave out that final paragraph. Let me tell you it cost me a pang to write it—for me the book ended with Joan and Derrick in the garden, but I felt as if I must drag the rest in, and I will wager you all the immense profits the book will eventually bring me, that if it is left out I shall be promptly set upon by fifty thousand ghastly people who will ask me why I did not "do something" with Anice, and also if "it isn't rather incomplete."

The question suggests itself, however, as to whether I am writing for these people. I would rather not—but must I?

. . . Sometimes I hate that girl, too. She seems too Sunday schooly. She is not what I meant her to be, but everybody won't dislike her as much as you do. Thank you for saying I shall not make such a mistake again. I don't think I shall. . . .

She was, it will be seen, anxious to be fully quit of the literary leading strings which had kept her in the rut of the commonplace English novel of the period. From another letter to Gilder of this time, a few paragraphs give a good picture of her state of mind:

". . . Thank you for the kind things you said. They help me to believe more in myself and when I can do that it makes such a difference. And there is no danger of my becoming vain. . . .

". . . The fact is I work very hard, but just now it is impossible that I should do the work I like best. I don't mean, you know, to urge that threadbare old plea, 'I must live,' I should not consider that necessary, or even desirable, but then you see there are four of us, so the miserable, obtrusive pot must boil.

In these days, as I cannot have books, I take people. Occasionally my conscience pricks me a little. I feel like a species of ghoul. I take a slice off somebody almost every day. I wonder if it is quite fair. But "needs must when. . . ."

"That Lass o' Lowrie's" was by this time completing its serial run in *Scribner's*, and it was creating an impression beyond even the highest that the young authoress had hoped. During the last part of her stay in New Market she wrote Gilder the following letter:

New Market, March 3, 1877.

My dear Mr. Gilder:

I am glad the book is to be published soon. In a few months I suppose I shall have the satisfaction of knowing whether or not I can do work worth money.

Standing as I do upon the low level of those debased persons to whom money must be the first object, I am degradingly anxious to know that.

. . . If you have cut the rest of the story only as you have the chapters already published, it can only have been to their improvement. In writing it, I made the mistake of forcing myself to write when I had nothing to say.

The opening paragraph is proof that the wine of success had not, to any great degree, gone to her head.

CHAPTER IX

FIRST DAYS IN WASHINGTON

It had been decided that Doro was to go to Washington, D. C. to look over the ground and set up an office if the outlook justified it. He felt that to use his equipment as a specialist on the eye and ear he must go to some bigger city, and to Frances it seemed that the more cosmopolitan atmosphere of the nation's capital would offer a needed stimulus. Thorvald Solberg, who had been a close family friend in Knoxville, had gone to Washington, and was in lodgings on F. Street, N. W., near Ninth, and he invited Swan to come and share his "diggins" with him.

The survey of Washington's possibilities having proved satisfactory, Doro forthwith hung out his shingle and set about to make professional connections.

In 1876, Washington was, compared with to-day, a quite primitive town. The mark of war times was still upon it, and it counted few wealthy people among its citizens. So the practice developed slowly. Doro's personal charm, however, won him many friends, and his ability was easily evident to the medical men of the city. Soon he found himself attached to the staff of the Medical Department of Georgetown University. Some time later he was made a member of the consulting staff of Garfield Hospital; and then he joined with the medical leaders of the national capital in founding the Emergency Hospital, in which he conducted clinics for eye and ear, and served in various other capacities as the institution grew.

Frances came to him, with the babies, in the spring of 1877. The move was a justifiable draft upon the chances of

fortune. In February, 1877, "That Lass o' Lowrie's" had been issued in book form. She wrote to Gilder:

Washington, April 30, 1877.

My dear Mr. Gilder:

Having read about fifteen reviews, I sat down and gave a sigh of relief. The throwing up of hats I defer until the sale of the tenth thousand.—Until then I can't afford it, unless I could borrow a hat from some bloated aristocrat with two.

. . . Don't you wish you could see the sonnet I received the other day, beginning, "Fame sits upon her lofty pinnacle, etc." Source, Melledgeville, Georgia. Doro alternately reads notices in a sonorous voice and snubs me to reduce me to submission, but secretly he quails before the eagle eye of the "Coming Woman."

Very sincerely,

F. H. Burnett.

The family had moved into a little two-story brick house on the south side of M Street, N. W., just beyond 17th Street. It looked across empty lots to the rather magnificent pile which had been erected in brick with sandstone trimmings, to house the British Legation, then a sort of outpost in the sparsely settled territory between Washington and the much older colonial settlement of Georgetown, across the then picturesque Rock Creek.

In its social atmosphere, the Washington of 1877 was Southern. A free and kindly sense of hospitality reigned; an open-handedness and an open-housedness that made friendly intercourse and casual entertainment simple and easy. All houses had front-porches and front-yards, shade trees and flowers. And, outdoor weather reigning so much of the time, families would be found in those unsophisticated days, seated on their front-porches, especially on summer afternoons and evenings, ready to welcome a passing friend.

As a nucleus of acquaintance in this new home, the Burnett family had Thorvald Solberg, and it was not long before he brought to the house David Hutchison, who was his chief, and superintendent of the Congressional Library. There were a few other people with Knoxville connections then living in Washington,—an artist named Hiram Fischer, who began to paint Mrs. Burnett's portrait, and a family of young women by the name of Macfarlane, Euphemia, Virginia, and Rachel, who were living with their brother-in-law, a young inventer, named Prall. With the Macfarlanes a relationship began which, especially in the case of Euphemia (called Effie) was practically life-long.

The expectation that Washington would provide a wider outlook and better surroundings for Frances and increased chances for Doro to develop his profession were to a large extent fulfilled. Dave Hutchison was a man of true student bent, widely familiar with literature, and an enthusiast. He had a clear view of the possibilities of the young writer's gift, and a sincere desire to help her develop it, and increase the fame that "That Lass" was bringing her. Being the head of the great Congressional Library, he was in a position to keep her in touch with the latest trend in literature. As a matter of fact, he outlined a reading course for her.

Between her, Hutchison, and Solberg there grew up a close intellectual friendship, an enthusiastic fourth party to which was Doro himself. Doro had taste, and a fine conception of romantic and dramatic values. Acting frequently as amanuensis for his wife, and in touch always with her plans for her stories, he was able in all the formative years of her work to give her helpful suggestions. While critical of any deficiencies in her work, and anxious to see it reach the highest in conception and execution, he realized her gift was not mere talent, but more in the nature of

Mrs. Burnett, during her first years in Washington, was writing "Haworth's" and "Louisiana."

actual genius, and that, to a certain degree, genius must "gang its own gait." So he admired, adored, and cheered her on, and gave her the best of his thought and advice.

The first months in Washington were not happy ones. The little house was uncomfortable, and both Frances and Vivian were ill, the latter passing through his second summer.

There is a fragment, marked in Frances' own writing, "A Real Record," which vividly showed how much her physical condition had undermined her real self; and while thoroughly untrue, in a sense, it reveals how much she always had to struggle against in her own moods.

"I wonder if it ever occurs to any one that it is possible that I should be tired. I don't think it does, in even the faintest manner. 'How did you get on this morning? How much did you do? Is your story nearly finished? How much longer will it take you?' That is what they say to me.

"I am a kind of pen driving machine, warranted not to wear out, that is all. And if I show signs of doing so, it is certainly astonishing and uncalled for. I have somehow begun to feel myself held by a remorseless, silent Fate.

"Write—write—write—be sick; be tired, be weak and out of ideas, if you choose; but write! There are people who are saying that to me always, even when they don't utter a word. I am ashamed to look them in the face, if I have not done my usual task. If they beat me with whips, they could not drive me more than they do by their thoughts and eagerness for my work, which communicate themselves to me without need for speech.

"Does anyone ever think that I ought to be happy? . . . I should be ashamed to write down upon paper, even in secret, the thoughts that are *forced* upon me, in spite of my efforts to crush them back every day of my disappointed

life. . . . I wonder if I shall ever understand—after I die—if there is an 'after.' But if there is not, and I am only a straw after all, and all this passion and misery is nothing but the wind that twists me! If I was sure of that, *then* the world should be mine as well.

"I am so tired this morning that my arms and hands tremble as I write, and every nerve in my body seems unstrung. I can see my weariness in my face when I look in the glass; my eyes are bloodshot and heavy. *I* could see it in the face of a man or woman I had never met before, but no one sees it in me—and who would care, if they did? and if I were to die tonight—what would that matter?

"It is a poor revenge—this dying. My dying would be a poorer revenge than any other. It would be a surprise, because I have nothing to die for, but I have even at last reached a stage of psychology which teaches me that it would be nothing more. People die every day and always have died. Who would remember me a week after the earth lay on me? Not one, *I swear*, of those who are nearest to me. Edith would care, and that would be all. And not *one* thought would rise with power enough to influence the future of the children I have almost given my soul for. . . . God give me my life for my children's sakes!"

It was not long before Washington, as a whole, began to be aware that Frances Hodgson Burnett, author of "Surly Tim's Trouble," and "That Lass o' Lowrie's," had come to live there. One of the first old residents to call was Mrs. George Schayer (Julia Schayer), wife by her second marriage of the Recorder of Deeds of the District of Columbia, and widow of a German Count Von Stosch, and a newspaper woman.

The day of her first visit, as she entered the small, rather dark parlor, she found herself facing a woe-begone little woman, standing in the middle of the room, with a fretful

baby over her shoulder. Mrs. Schayer, herself the head of a large family, sympathized with and encouraged the young mother, beginning a friendship lasting in its close intimacy until Mrs. Schayer went to live in Europe; and after that constantly renewed until Mrs. Burnett's last days.

Early in their acquaintance Mrs. Schayer wrote a biographical sketch of her friend, and her description of Mrs. Burnett is particularly worth quoting as a vivid, contemporaneous impression. She writes:

". . . The first question that arises regarding Mrs. Burnett, certainly in every feminine mind, is, "Is she handsome?" . . . There are those who call Mrs. Burnett plain, and those who call her beautiful. Some have found her cold, and an indifferent talker, while others have left her presence in a state of wild enthusiasm over her vivacity and brilliancy.

". . . Mrs. Burnett is of medium stature, inclined to stoutness, but carrying herself very well. Her head is large, and covered with curling light brown hair, worn very low over her forehead, concealing a fact well-known to intimate friends, that she has a wonderful dome-like brow, resembling Shakespeare's in size and shape—a brow that, if there be anything in phrenology, evinces powers as yet only partially expressed in her works. Her eyes are neither blue, green, brown, black, purple, topaz, grey, or any of the rainbow tints ascribed to them by imaginative correspondents, but rather a mingling of the first and last, a fine, limpid blue-grey; they are large-pupiled, thoughtful, and at times brilliant; in short, the eyes of a sensitive, intellectual woman. Her nose is large, her mouth well-formed, and her smile most agreeable. For the rest she is as one happens to find her—gay, amusing, fascinating, or reserved, distrait, even haughty, as the case may be."

The M Street house was so uncomfortable, inconvenient, and insanitary, that neither Frances nor the babies nor the doctor could stand it. So in less than a year they found more satisfactory living quarters at 813 13th Street. Here the joys of Washington life began really to unfold. The main visitors were still Dave Hutchison, Solberg, the MacFarlanes, and Julia Schayer, but there were little parties being given in the new house, and parties with Frances, as any occasion inevitably did, meant new dresses. New dresses at this period were events of importance, occasions to be dramatized, as indicated by the story of one, possibly the first "creation" to make its appearance in the 13th Street house. The advent of the gown made by Frances' own fair hand was heralded beforehand to Doro, Hutchison, and Solberg. The evening for its first public appearance was set. At the appointed hour the sliding doors between the parlor and dining-room were rolled apart, to disclose to the audience that had been herded in the front room—Frances, in all the dainty glory of new newly finished toilette. She took the uproarious applause, bowing and smiling, and the gown was voted in every way a success.

CHAPTER X

A NEW HOME AND "HAWORTH'S"

The most joyous of the Washington days were spent in 1215 I Street, N. W., the Burnett family's next home, where "Little Lord Fauntleroy" was written. During the years spent there she was the embodiment of "The Mother." Her boys were her real life, and she gave herself, eagerly, to watching and thrilling over their every action and thought.

It was not a pretentious house, although, according to the prevailing story, it had been presented to President Grant by the nation in appreciation of his services. It was three-storied brick, standing midway on the north side of the block between 12th and 13th Streets. Two large maple trees grew before it, and there was a small space of lawn, with a short path at the side leading to the rather low front-door steps.

Because there was little traffic in it, the broad street in front of the house was an ideal play spot for the Burnett boys. New York Avenue, the next thoroughfare south, was the business street. An impressive "emporium," run by the Misses Stuntz, was on its north side, between 12th and 13th Streets. Hence it could be reached by any willing young son, without his having to cross any street, after he had made safely, under the maternal eye, the passage of I Street directly in front of the house. One cent would purchase almost anything on the toy table at "Miss Stuntz's," so an errand would always be gladly undertaken to the store, with a penny in one hand and mother's written list of dressmaker's needs in the other.

On the corner of 12th and New York Avenue was Page's

grocery, which was later to figure in "Fauntleroy." The owner of the store, Mr. Page, was as open-hearted as his shop was open-doored, and he was not averse to giving mother's young messenger, once in a while, a chance to put his hand in the prune box or the brown sugar and cracker barrels. At the corner of 13th and I Streets, stood a quite imposing brick residence, at that time occupied by Senator James A. Garfield (later President) and his family of boys and girls.

Around the corner of 13th Street, and half a block up the smart little hill, stood the Franklin Public School, a seat of learning to which for many consecutive years Mrs. Burnett sent the boys.

"Twelve-fifteen" I Street was in no sense a modern house, even for those days; but it was well built, with large rooms and large windows, and really made a comfortable home. On the ground floor was a wide entrance hall, with stairs running up. The particular virtue of this stairway was the landing at the turn, half way up, where any little boy, being sent by mother up alone to bed in the dark, could turn round and protect himself from any bears or other creatures of the shadows which might be following behind. It also enabled him to survey the next half flight and the hall beyond; to discover if mother had left the nursery door open and if—if—if—the nursery gas was lit, thus to gather courage for the final rush through the remaining gloom into its pale, but friendly glow. And, of course, the gas was usually lit, burning low, and a chair and much care had to be used to get the light turned *up*, and—oh—not—not—*down*, as once or twice tragically happened!

The front parlor opened through sliding doors to the right, and, directly in face, one saw an elaborate carved marble mantle piece, with a large white bear rug spread

before, a shiny brass fender, well polished andirons, and usually a log fire glowing.

The back room also was distinguished by a marble mantle piece, rugged, fendered, and andironed, with a comfortable arm chair before it. This room bore evidence of being the office of Doctor Swan M. Burnett, oculist and aurist. There were "test cards" upon the walls, instruments with revolving black semi-circles, and cases filled with rows of test-glasses. In the middle of the room was the doctor's flat top working desk, usually littered with papers and medical magazines. On occasions of great festivity, the back parlor was thrown into the front and so arranged that guests could gather there and refreshments be served.

The dining-room, of not very imposing dimensions, lay back of the hall, in an ell, and behind that the kitchen. The boys' nursery, as already indicated, was on the second floor, and back of it was the main bedroom, which Frances and Doro occupied.

On the third floor was her Den, a magic place, filled with all sorts of cozy feelings and comforts for her boys and her visitors. It had a fireplace, with a black fur rug before it, and on that a big armchair that held a sleepy boy easily on a mother's lap, even when he had become quite big and heavy. There was a comfortable sofa under the two windows, a large book-case and several miscellaneous chairs, tabourets, and tables, not forgetting a small roll-top desk in one corner, chiefly used as a storage place for the "treasures" brought as votive offerings by her two little lovers.

The writing table was in the middle of the floor, and the nondescript chair had its back to the fire. It was a rather indeterminate kind of a table, large enough for papers to spread out upon it, but with no definite character beyond

that. There were soft rugs on the floor, and a multitude of ornaments and draperies and bows and pictures about, completing the customary bric-a-brackishness in those days associated with a "Den."

Being seamstress for herself and the small boys, and having other domestic duties, as well as social ones, the young mother's days were something more than full. But she did write steadily, retiring to her den soon after breakfast, and giving warning to all young Apaches that she was not to be disturbed. As could be expected, however, an unbroken morning's work was a rarity, and there were discovered a thousand irresistible reasons why one or two pair of stout-calved, heavy-shoed little legs should trudge up the two flights of stairs and their owners knock on her door, the excuses running all the way from a cut finger or barked knee to the discovery of some pretty stone or leaf that should immediately be put in the "treasure drawer."

Despite all such affectionate interruptions, she managed during the next year or so to produce a respectable list of shorter stories—"Mère Giraud's Little Daughter," "Esmeralda," "Le Monsieur de la Petite Dame," "Smethurstses," "Ladusky," "Notwithstanding," the latter appearing in *Harper's*, but most of her product appearing in *Scribner's*.

In book form, "That Lass o' Lowrie's" was selling by the thousands, and this meant, of course, comparative opulence in the near future. Letters, too, from admirers in all parts of the world were pouring in. But, to Frances, the laurels of "That Lass" were in no sense evergreen.

A new novel was on the way, which she was anxious to make even bigger in conception, and finer in execution than her first success. Doro, Hutchison, and Solberg were likewise ambitious for it; so was the black-haired young editor at *Scribner's*. The closeness of the co-operation between the two is indicated by the following letters.

Washington.

MY DEAR MR. GILDER:

It is only my usual luck that the iron bedstead is not permitted by Fate to fall to my share this time. I am just in the midst of an effort to clothe my army for the Spring, and to further that end have hired a sewing machine which I drive as fast as it will go at every moment I am not writing.

. . . The book progresses splendidly. It is another version of the "Poor Passion" with new characters and scenes and Lancashire. I think it is to be called "Haworth's." I enjoy it very much and seem always ready for it. When I have ten chapters you shall see them. At least, I know you won't have to cut out. One of the heroes (there are two) is an American and I feel sure both are good work.

With thanks and regrets again. . . .

1215 I Street,
Thursday morning.

I am so glad you were born and I do hope you will *never*, *never* die! What should I do if you were to die?

Now I can go on and you will see I shall do something good. Somehow, you are always in tune. It is so grand that when I have been roused desperately by anything it never passes you by. It would have half killed me if you had not cared about that last graveyard scene. It is such a short little thing but it actually took life out of me and made me feel weak and shaky.

I called Doro and read it to him and then went into his vest and cried in the most passionate manner. Don't know why. It took hold of me. I feel as if it would end finely.

What you say about my belief in you is true. I do know you care and want to help me—and indeed, you do.

Yours gratefully,

F. H. BURNETT.

Washington, D. C.
September 1877.

My dear R. W. G.:

Thanks for your note about the story. If I can find time for it I should like to put it in, but just now I am wrestling so violently with the book that I have not courage to attack anything else. It is like walking on eggs. Pray for me that I may not criticize the life out of it.

The difference between this and the "Lass" is that then I was simply writing a story, and now I am trying to please the critics. It is a fatal kind of thing and I am trying desperately to overcome the feeling, and perhaps I shall, in time.

It would do your heart good to see me write and cut out, and brood and groan and get up and lead myself round the room by the bang. Tell my dear H. DeK. [Helena DeKay, Mrs. Gilder's maiden name] that her pet abomination is nearly pulled up by the roots and that it seems likely I shall write "Finis" to it and the new book at the same time. . . .

The rest of this letter touches upon two matters which later took on serious importance, the republication of some of her young girl stories in book form, and a pirated dramatic version of "That Lass."

. . . The Petersons sent in a dozen copies of "Theo" yesterday and I send one to Mrs. Gilder to read, mark and inwardly digest. It is full of the most ridiculous typographical errors—"Bacon" for "Byron"—"wild" for "mild"—"viante" for "riant"—etc. etc.—but it is a pathetic sort of thing to me now. It is such a nice, idiotic, sixteeny little thing. I was a much nicer girl when I wrote that than I am now. I did not know whether to laugh or cry last night when I went over it.

Of course, the Petersons have broken their promise to announce on the title page that it was a reprint, and not a new book.

What a lovely thing it is to get your living by your brains. As "Liz" is such a success, Mr. Hatton is paving the way for leaving me in the cold by writing to the *New York Times* that but for his drama (I wish you could read it) my book would not have been a success at all, and people would never have heard of it. . . .

The matter of the play out of "That Lass" was important in that it directed her creative interest into a new field, the drama. Charles Reade, and a man named Hatton, had put on a play version of her book in England, of which she had seen a copy. When Gilder took up her remarks on the subject she answered:

DEAR R. W. G.:

It is the queerest thing you should have written that card about the play. I got so excited about Hatton's impudence and was so disgusted with his play (which is the coarsest grained thing an idiot could have founded on anything decent) that I plunged into dramatizing it myself this morning.

I never was so excited about anything in my life. I have rewritten the whole of the first act and am going on like wild fire. I can't stop a moment.

Doro is just like that woman of yours. He keeps saying, "Now, don't get excited, don't get excited," but I am and will be. My drama is as different from Hatton's as—Oh! I don't know what.

I make Dan Lowrie talk Dan Lowrie, and Joan talk Joan, instead of drivelling about her broken heart as Hatton has her do. I am wild to finish it and have you compare the

two. We have got it safe in America, at least, and Hatton's play shall *not* be played to spoil my reputation. Oh! if I could see you! Doro suggests pounded ice.

Yours frantically,

THE DRAMATIST.

Thus Frances sprang to the protection of her brain-child. Moreover, she was temperamentally interested in the stage and play-writing, and did not intend that this good material and this good chance should be taken from her. Negotiations for the production of her version were taken up with John T. Raymond, who wanted his wife, Marie Gordon, to star in it.

Although it was to some extent her version which was put on, Raymond evidently invited the expert assistance of Julian Magnus, for, on the Booth Theatre playbills, his name appears with hers as joint author. Its production, however, did not mean an immense fortune to the author, as she received only $25 for each performance, and the run lasted only a few weeks, beginning November 28, 1878. But this experience with a play at least whetted her appetite for more drama-writing. She wrote to Gilder, inviting the assistance of his sister, Jeanette, a literary agent, and later editor of *The Critic*.

MY DEAR MR. GILDER:

I do wish your sister would let me know what she thinks of "Esmeralda" as a foundation for a play. It seems to me that it is good for a large amount of working up. . . .

. . . Of course, I don't know a solitary thing about the business part of such work and Miss Jennie would have to forgive me in advance for all sorts of ingenuous idiocies, but I do believe I could put those people into position and make them say things her experience could use.

If she believes I can, too, ask her to write to me and then if I can make it possible I will come to New York. I shall, however, make my dash at the play first so that I can bring the manuscript with me. . . .

Very sincerely,

F. Hodgson Burnett.

Here was the start of what proved to be her first and really splendid dramatic success, of which more later.

To this particular period belongs the disturbing episode connected with the book of "Theo" mentioned in a previous letter. T. B. Peterson & Bros., of Philadelphia, seeing the success of "That Lass," thought to make capital out of it by reprinting in book form a number of stories that had appeared in *Peterson's Magazine*. Mrs. Burnett, realizing the immature quality of those tales, consented only after making certain stipulations. That her objections were correct was proved by the tenor of the reviews of the book—one of which, in an influential New York paper, ran in part:

". . . It is annoying to begin our list of failures with a book by the author of 'That Lass o' Lowrie's' but we have no wish to justify the profound contempt for criticism evinced in a proceeding which is rapidly becoming a common practice. . . . We cannot affirm with positive certainty that Mrs. Burnett has engaged in the speculative enterprise of selling chaff after wheat. The story, however, published under the title of 'Theo' (T. B. Peterson) bears all the marks of a tentative, crude essay, and is to 'That Lass o' Lowrie's' as a tyro's stiff, pale etching to the broad, glowing performance of an experienced hand."

She was much hurt, and, after thrashing out the subject in correspondence with Gilder, decided to make a statement to the public. This was issued by Scribner & Arm-

strong, under the title, "A Card, from the author of 'That Lass o' Lowrie's.'"

The statement related that T. B. Peterson & Bros., of Philadelphia, had offered her a royalty for permission to reprint in book form several uncopyrighted stories that had appeared in *Peterson's Magazine*, alleging that a "dime novel" firm was preparing to put them out anyway, without permission or royalty. Under these circumstances she reluctantly agreed, requiring, however, that on the title page it be clearly indicated that these were stories of her girlhood. She never saw proofs, and when the first book, "Theo," appeared, she found that the stipulations she had made had been disregarded and the books appeared as being new works. The statement specifically exonerated her old friend, Charles J. Peterson adding: "He was my earliest and best friend, and to his thoughtful generosity I owe more than I can ever repay."

From the letters quoted above to R. W. G. (page 83), it is evident that the projected new novel was already well under way. The author turned often to her kindly friend at Scribner's, and the correspondence between the two shows the earnestness with which she was approaching her work, and the heartfelt character of the encouragement she was receiving from R. W. G. The date line on the following shows that "Haworth's" was begun in the little 13th Street house:

813–13th Street, Washington.
October 23, 1877.

My dear R. W. G.:

. . . You will rejoice to hear that "Haworth's" progresses gorgeously. I wrote a scene this morning which I believe will make you quiver. And the sole object of my literary existence is to make R. W. G. quiver. I am not afraid of you now as I was in the first six chapters which I wrote and re-wrote five times.

I am *stronger* than you now, vile tyrant, and have cast off your yoke and trampled it under foot, but I like to try things on you in spirit as upon a many-stringed and sensitive instrument.

I write something and then gloat over it. "Possible effect on R. W. G?" I say, "He will quiver." And then I gloat again and proceed. This scene is a queer thing. It is not a loud scene and it wrote itself. Before I knew anything about it a woman came to a certain door and stood there. I did not have an idea of what she was going to say and once I stopped to turn her back. But she walked in herself and said and did some things which caused me to come downstairs afterwards and *sing*—sing at the top of my voice.

Washington,
February 5, 1878.

My dear R. W. G.:

. . . I am in a queer sort of mood. (I ought to have begun by saying that Doro sends you the first installment to-morrow.) After working and going through agonies untold, and raving and tearing and hating myself and every word I ever wrote, I have suddenly walked out into a cool place and begun to soar, and have soared and soared until I don't think I shall ever return to earth again.

How it happens—how, after loathing a thing and slaving over it and writing every chapter of it over again and over again and over again, and slashing into it, and cutting out of it, I can suddenly stand apart from it in cold blood and say, "It is—*stunning*,"—I don't see.

. . . I believe some of it is just *terrible*. There is a dead man in it who is the most *living* creature I ever made—just a simple, gentle, working man whose life was a failure and who died and lies out under the grass in a little country graveyard—and who yet lives and *lives* and *lives*—!

Quiver over him—quiver! I have done it. I have been seeing his patient dead body lying there in the dark under the earth and out of the world—for weeks! I believe he's *great*. Whenever I write one word about him I see him.

But it is very queer to say so much before hand. Read for yourself. I want you to know each other, though. Let me introduce you. "Mr. Richard Watson Gilder—A Dead Man. Turn over a little, Dead Man. This is the Author of 'The New Day.' I wish you had lived long enough to read it."

. . . I find myself obliged to go out very often and if I were to tell you what happened to me you would think my head was turned. . . . I have a very exciting time.

I dare say if I stayed here long enough I might have a boiled senator for dinner every day. I wonder how they would taste.

. . . Lionel and Vivian are gorgeous. Lionel grows into a beauty. I heard of Rodman [Gilder's son, and eldest] the other night from Mrs. Moran, whom I met at an Artists' reception. I sent Mrs. Gilder a message by her.

Give my warm love to that young woman and tell her I wish to know if Rodman *walks*.

We *are* going to see Modjeska, you may be sure.

Very sincerely yours,

F. H. B.

At length the "big book" was finished and was to begin in *Scribner's* in the number of November, 1878. On receiving the proofs, she wrote this letter to Gilder:

1215 I Street,
September 20, 1878.

My dear R. W. G.:

The installment of "Haworth's" has just arrived and Doro is reading it with raptures for the five-hundredth

time. With you for a critic, how nice to have Doro for a husband!

Having glanced over it myself it seems to me that if I had never seen it before I should be interested in it. The pictures of Murdock are not at all like him. They are too boyish and conventional. He ought to be dark and tall and gaunt. He seems to me more like you in the face than anyone else, but he is bigger and long limbed and strong and loose jointed. Would it be any use telling the artist this face (My man's face) is like yours and would you mind it? I don't mean that he should photograph you but that he should think of your face when he is at work on Murdock's.

. . . I returned to Washington on Tuesday night after having been six days on the road.

. . . We rode a hundred and fifty miles on horseback over mountain roads, and on the edges of precipices that would make you shudder. I didn't enjoy it, but I was interested. I did not go for enjoyment. My face and throat are burned cardinal red.

. . . I have just finished Henry James' "Europeans." What a *neat* imagination that man has. That is it—a neat imagination. He does not make me glad or sorry or triumphant. All the time I am admiring Henry James and thinking how beautifully he goes all round a thing and what excellent order he leaves it in—with no ends straggling—no gaps—no thin places. "How clever you are," I keep saying, "and how neat."

Give my love to Mrs. Gilder and Rodman. Lionel is four years old today. . . .

Yours sincerely,

F. H. B.

CHAPTER XI

BOSTON AND "LOUISIANA"

Boston, the literary centre of America in those days, could hardly fail to recognize a writer, even though a young woman, who had to her credit two successful novels. As big as it was, New York was really only a commercial stopping place on the way to that district, hallowed by the long list of early American writers whom we have all learned to revere. The young author in Washington was therefore delighted when she received from no less than John Boyle O'Reilly, as President of the Papyrus Club, Boston's literary centre of centres, the following invitation:

Papyrus Club,
Boston, February 4, 1879.

Mrs. F. H. Burnett.

Dear Madam:

The President and Members of the Papyrus Club request the pleasure of your company at dinner at the Revere House, on Saturday, February 15th, at 6 o'clock, to meet Miss Louisa Alcott, Mrs. H. H. Jackson, Mrs. Mary Mapes Dodge, Miss E. S. Phelps, Miss Harriet W. Preston, Mrs. Celia Thaxter, Mrs. R. H. Stoddard, Mrs. J. J. Piatt, Mrs. Harriet Prescott Spofford, Mrs. L. C. Moulton, Mrs. Rose Hawthorne Lathrop, Miss Nora Perry, Mrs. Pratt, Mrs. D. A. Goddard, Miss Annie Cary and Miss Clara Louise Kellogg.

Very respectfully,

John Boyle O'Reilly (Presid't).
C. W. Chase, (Sec'y).

Please reply to the Secretary P. O. Box 1209.

To be the guest of honor at a Papyrus Club banquet, for such it turned out she was to be, was indeed cause for excitement, and some trepidation. So she wrote to Gilder:

My dear Poet:

. . . You are an experienced individual. Please tell me frankly in confidence if you think I should like it. It startles me just at first to be brought before the world by people who have entertained Longfellow and Holmes and other distinguished persons. Would I be simply expected to beam my little beam as I do in Washington, and murmur gently, "Thanks. You are very kind to say so." "You are very good, etc., etc." . . .

Gilder evidently gave her good advice, and she received this tactful letter from another friend in the *Scribner* forces, Mary Mapes Dodge, editor of *St. Nicholas*, and the author of the classic, "Hans Brinker and the Silver Skates."

28 East 20th Street, New York.
February 10, 1879.

My dear Mrs. Burnett:

I am very glad that you have decided to go to Boston, and I trust we may see each other there and make up for lost time.

Perhaps, if you have no escort, you may like to go to the Revere House, where I shall settle for a day or two, because the dinner is to be at that house, and it will be "handy" for unprotected females to step down stairs to the dining room. (Nothing mean about me, you see, when the length of a sentence is concerned.) . . . If you have any photographs of the babies, will you not put them in your satchel for the benefit of

Yours very sincerely,
Mary Mapes Dodge.

The journey was made comfortably, and everything appeared as lovely as could be for the reception of the young

authoress by the literary lights of the Boston area. And then occurred a mishap which has been laughed over for half a century since, but which, at that time, was desperate tragedy for a really timid and socially inexperienced little woman. A kindly young Harvard professor invited her to go with him to Concord, to see the historic town and meet Emerson, the trip to be made in the afternoon, before the banquet in her honor. The dear old Sage of Concord was met, and an excursion about the town was being considered when the escort suddenly awoke to the important fact that there was no train running to Boston from Concord which would get his confiding guest back in time for the banquet. Certainly a dramatic moment for a young gentleman who was striving to do a kindness! And, indeed, a piteously painful moment for a diffident young writer who had come a long distance, with much misgiving, to be honored by a gathering of literary notables!

There always remained a curtain drawn over the hours that passed between this moment and the arrival of the demure young guest of honor, long after the banquet had begun, to be ushered into the seat still held vacant beside Toastmaster John Boyle O'Reilly. Cadraad Haard must surely have come to her rescue in that dire hour, for it is of record that, late, gauche, inconsiderate, or whatever she might have appeared, she carried off the day, and this, too, while keeping her resolve that there should be no excuses given that would involve the good judgment or good name of any kindly intentioned young gentleman. That she brought the situation through to victory is evidenced by what O'Reilly wrote:

The Pilot Editorial Rooms,
Boston, March 14, 1879.

DEAR MRS. BURNETT:

Thank you for giving me a miserable excuse for answering your letter; you asked me a question. Yes, you behaved

badly at the dinner—deliciously and exquisitely badly (there are adverbs for you). But if you had a good time, I give you absolution (this is a semi-religious paper, Mrs. Burnett) and when "Haworth's comes with the fierce and curly autograph—which I shall never see till then, I expect —I shall give it a grave place among the theologies. . . . Do you know how you charmed everyone in Boston, Mrs. Burnett? Oh, of course not; but you did. . . .

The reviews of "That Lass o' Lowrie's" when it appeared as a book were such as might have turned anybody's head. The *Springfield Republican*, in those days arbiter of New England opinion and taste, in its issue of April 10, 1880, eulogized the novel and author at a column's length, striking this keynote:

". . . The book is wonderfully fresh, clear and strong; the plot is slight, but it is sufficient; the movement is as direct and forceful as life. The author's purpose has plainly been just to tell a story, not to inculcate a moral lesson or to further a reform, though there is seldom written anything more full of moral and humane elements. The story seems to have presented itself in the shape of a series of singularly strong dramatic situations, conceived with a vigor that animates the page, and all bearing on the growth and tributary to the masterly portraiture of one of the finest creations of fiction—Joan Lowrie."

The hardly less revered *Boston Transcript* said:

"Taken as a whole, we know of no more powerful work from a woman's hand in the English language, not even excepting the best of George Eliot's."

And the New York *Herald* literally exploded in a review, containing this paragraph:

"We have no hesitation in saying that there is no living writer (man or woman) who has Mrs. Burnett's dramatic

power in telling a story. This probably seems like very strong praise, and so it is; but no one who reads the story carefully will say that it is not deserved. The publication of a story like 'That Lass o' Lowrie's' is a red-letter day to the world of literature."

The little girl from Manchester, via East Tennessee, might easily have considered that she had struck her pace and found her place. It was natural for the very next book that she should go back to the same locale. Nevertheless, "Haworth's" was definitely in a new style; a canvas giving a realistic background of life with human characters thrown up against it to live their particular parts of the particular story in hand, and, having served the author's purpose, to go their ways.

When the story had completed its run in *Scribner's*, and appeared in book form, there was considerable of an uproar from the Ancient and Honorable Order of Novel Readers—they wanted to know what happened to this and what happened to that character after the author had made her use of them. These complaints were a source of amusement rather than anything else to *Scribner's* editors. So they were treated by Robert Underwood Johnson, who at that time had become Assistant Editor on the staff of *Scribner's:*

April 26, 1880.

My dear Mrs. Burnett:

I am preparing a circular in response to queries like that on the enclosed postal card. It will read as follows:

"The Editor of *Scribner*, in response to inquiry regarding the movements of the characters of Haworth's, after they had served the purpose of the author, takes pleasure in saying that:

"Miss Ffrench's object in going abroad was to repent the error of her ways and enlist as a nurse in the Franco-

VIVIAN (left) at about 2½ years of age when Mrs. Bennett was living at 1413 I Street, Washington, D. C., and writing "Louisiana."
LIONEL (right). Mrs. Bennett's eldest son at 3 years of age. The death of Lionel was her life's greatest tragedy.

German War, at the conclusion of which she came to America as a colporter, devoting herself to the more degraded districts of the country—especially doing great good among the outcasts of Beacon and Murray Hills, and the Capitol Building at Washington. Struck with the beauty of the Hebraic faith while on a visit to Wall Street, she became a convert and was sent as a missionary to convert the Quakers of Leadville, when, by the merest accident, she met Murdock, who was largely interested in introducing his invention into the Alta Montana and Crysolite mines. It seems that he had had great difficulty in introducing his invention on account of a description of it, with diagrams, having been telegraphed home to the *Herald* by cable soon after it was invented."

And so on, in a jocular vein, through a long rigamarole, ending:

"Murdock and Miss Ffrench are to be married in the fall from Tiffany's, and will have a house in a flat in New York, having their meals furnished by a colored caterer. Janey Briarly is to be their maid-of-all work. Briarly is draying with a yellow mule at Kansas City. The other characters have not been heard from, but the enterprising editors and publishers of *Scribner* have an editor (Mr. Gilder), an art director (Mr. Drake), an artist (Mr. Blum), and a wood engraver (Mr. Clausen), now in Europe, or on "the briny," determined to bring them to justice.

"If any reader of the magazine is not satisfied with this state of affairs, the author will take pleasure in setting Allen Pinkerton on the track of perverse characters. We are determined to satisfy our readers if we have to have the story rewritten *ab initio*, or interchange the characters of all the *dramatis personae*."

Yours very truly,

R. U. Johnson.

But with "Louisiana," her next book, Mrs. Burnett changed the scene completely for her readers. She brought them to a real America—as real and characteristic as had been her manufacturing, coal-mining north-of-England county. It was country that she knew quite as well. Though the scene was set in North Carolina, it might just as easily have been in East Tennessee. The characters were, in fact, taken out of her own surroundings in New Market and Knoxville; the dialect was of the common people she had lived with during her adolescent years, and the only new element was the "Hot Springs" life, of which she had caught glimpses during that riding trip mentioned in a previous letter to Gilder, which had taken her through some summer resorts in the North Carolina mountains.

Dear old Uncle Elbert Rodgers was largely created out of Frances Hodgson's love for old Doctor Burnett, who had just the same self-sacrificing sweetness, though he was much more cultured and a stronger character.

Her fast growing public was delighted with this really American novel, and many considered it even finer than "That Lass o' Lowrie's." Beginning its serialization in January, 1880, in *Scribner's*, it created, as most of her books did, its own special group of enthusiasts.

Among them was Joseph Longworth, then a prominent capitalist of Cincinnati, who sent her in token of his appreciation an India silk shawl. He wrote with his gift:

May 28, 1880.

I send you this antique shawl. It was made in Cashmere more than a hundred years ago. It was made in the good primeval times, when men worked in the spirit of art, and not for gain.

. . . This beautiful work of art comes out of the distant and the past! from beyond Candahar and Ispahan! "out

of the gateways of the day," with greetings to the honest and good woman, who, with her innocent thoughts and beautiful fancies is helping to "save" the world.

This, no doubt, is why I was prompted to send this shawl to you.

Cashmere and a hundred years ago are so far from my here and now that when it floated into my presence, I accepted it with wonder, and "said grace" over it, as I do for the sunshine and showers.

Coming to you also from the unknown, you too may overlook the proximate (and trivial) cause and give thanks for it, as for the other "good and perfect gifts" which have fallen upon you.

I send it, as an acknowledgement for what I owe you for writing "Louisiana" for *me*. I take it as personal, for I think I am a good deal like "Uncle Elbert." It is true, I was got in hand and slicked up a little, 40 or 50 years ago,—"Thet's so"! But it is only an outside lacquer—and for all that lies below in this honest and loving heart, I flatter myself when I fancy a faint resemblance.

JOS. LONGWORTH.

Mr. Longworth was father of Nicholas Longworth, now serving so ably in Congress, the son-in-law of Theodore Roosevelt.

CHAPTER XII

WASHINGTON INTIMACIES

Jokingly Frances and Doro referred to Washington Society as "The Vortex." Frances could hardly have escaped being sucked into this vortex, even had she been out of sympathy with it. She liked people; she liked bright conversation and laughter; she liked affection, and cosy intimacy. Therefore, the parlor of the little house at Twelve-fifteen became soon a rendezvous for the cleverest people in the Capital, and, in its way, a shrine for all visitors to the city.

The Washington coterie from the feminine side began with the Macfarlanes, particularly Effie, and Julia Schayer. Frances and Julia had become close friends immediately, as writers, and mothers of young broods. Julia being ambitious to have her work accepted by the better magazines, Frances, who had a very genuine admiration for her ability, endeavored to help her. They were further drawn together by the fact that Julia had much sorrow to go through in the early years, due to the sickness and death of her children.

Mrs. Schayer's troubles with family sicknesses began very early in the friendship. Frances undertook to cheer her through one of them by daily letters, since Julia, because of the disease being contagious, was quarantined.

Wednesday Evening.

MY DEAR, DEAR FRIEND:

I cannot tell you how glad I was to have your letter this morning and to find it contain the good news that the dear little laddie was better.

. . . I will write to you as often as I can in the hope that it will brighten you a little. By way of giving you a scrap of

news from the outside world I will tell you that on Saturday night I went to the Literary Club meeting at Dr. Lincoln's. It was extremely "swell"—"Purple and fine raiment, etc., etc." and I had some very nice things said to me. The President (not Mr. Hayes, but Judge Drake) took me to supper and *walked me round*. He is a nice, cosy old gentleman and was much surprised to find me less than a hundred. He took my hand and patted it and said, "Why, you little childish young thing. What do you mean by writing a book like that?

. . . With the very warmest of love, I am always,

Your loving friend,

FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT.

Thursday morning.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

. . . What a friendship should I be worthy of if your pain did not draw me closer to you?

. . . Last night I had a pleasure you ought to have shared. We went to see Jefferson in Rip Van Winkle. Did you ever see him? I suppose so. You have been more fortunate than I in such experiences. I never was so charmed in my life. It is the most *exquisite* thing. I went, not understanding how anything really artistic could be made of the story—and the pathos and beauty of it roused me to the most intense feeling. It is high art—no, it is human nature. I am as full of it after a night's sleep as I was when looking on. It isn't the play itself—it is Jefferson. He *creates* it. He has a helpless, abstracted way of using his hands which is the most singularly pathetic thing I can imagine. One can study every breath he draws, it seems to me—all means something. How he must have worked at it and thought over it and *lived* it to have wrought it into such perfection of simpleness. It could be made such

a poor, coarse framework in coarser hands. I wouldn't see another man do it for worlds.

I shall write better today and perhaps give a worthier chapter to the world for having seen Rip Van Winkle last night. What an effect for good work and enthusiasm anything really good is. If I could see a perfect picture or a perfect actor or read a few perfect words every day I should be worth as much again and again for my labor. . . .

Your friend always,

FRANCES H. B.

Mrs. Burnett's strong dramatic instinct has been commented on. The following letter, written early in their friendship from Philadelphia, where she was visiting the Charles Petersons for a few days, reveals how she herself viewed this inclination.

1501 Walnut Street.
Saturday.

MY DARLING JULIA:

I know you think I am a fiend for not answering your nice letter, but since I have been here and in New York my life has not been my own. In the daytime I have been struggling with the play and every evening I have either gone out or had people to meet me at a delightful "swell" dinner. Now I have to cut my visit short and rush off to New York again with Mrs. Raymond, to attend a Sunday night rehearsal. I think before I have done with it the piece will be all right. ["That Lass o' Lowrie's" play.]

. . . The other morning, as I was going over the additions I had made to the Jud Bates' part (I have made him a clever London gamin) and we were bemoaning that the girl who has it is not clever enough for it, I said, without thinking, "Oh, how I wish I could take it." Mrs. R. clutched me and almost shrieked, "Oh," she said, "if you only would. I would give the *world* if you would. If you

would only once try it in some little town." Of course, I told her it was impossible, but wouldn't it be a lark? However, I have a husband, also offspring, and consequently rather shall my right hand cleave to the roof of my mouth.

I write this scrawl in mad haste. The carriage is at the door and Mrs. Peterson is waiting. I will try to write when I am "on the road." Don't tell anyone about even that. It is simply a business escapade, but told in the rough, it might sound as if I had taken to a new career.

R. W. G. would send his love if he were here. He adores you. With love,

Your friend,

F. H. B.

Euphemia Macfarlane was a friend of a different character, one who in kindly affection and sweet, faithful service meant a great deal to the young authoress, and was with her through almost every phase of her life experience. By one of those strange chances which sometimes befall, the letters which passed between the two in these early days were destroyed; only one or two of a much later period remain. "Effie" supplied a type of simple, cosy companionship of which Frances stood greatly in need. A school teacher, somewhat older, she was a well balanced person, with individuality in abundance, possessed of a fine power of observation, coupled with a keen sense of humor that expressed itself in dry or comical comments. She had a store of anecdotes which she told with inimitable drollery and truth of dialect. When she came to stay the night with Frances, she could make a whole sheaf of irresistibly funny stories out of the mere incidents of the day as she had seen them in her school, in the home or as she walked through the streets. To Frances, often exhausted by a day's hard writing, or keyed up and nervous, this was always soothing. Whenever Frances was in Washington,

Effie spent much of her time with her, seated by her bedside at night, and she was very often an invited guest, for months at a time, at Frances' summer homes. This friendship was important and characteristic, and a considerable factor in the early Washington days.

One of the letters to Julia refers to R. W. Gilder. Mrs. Burnett was trying to help her friend place her stories with *Scribner's*. No one was more willing to recommend young writers to editors, or to read and talk over their stories. Her hand was out always to help those of the guild, and her pocketbook, too, was open.

As time went on her kindness in this direction was imposed upon by some who sent her manuscripts, and she felt it wiser not to allow herself to read stories sent to her by people she did not know. But where it was the case of someone she knew or whose good faith was properly vouched for, she would give generously of her time and her experience. Nothing could be more characteristic of her willingness in this direction than her answer to a little eighth-grade school girl, who wrote, as a subscriber to *St. Nicholas Magazine*, asking how to take up a literary career. Mrs. Burnett made this reply to her four specific questions:

Question 1: "At what age did you first wish to take up work?"

Answer: "I began to write when I was seven years old, but it was merely because I liked to do it. I did not think of it as work, but as my form of play. If you will get "The One I Knew Best of All" from the Library and read Chapters 11-25 and 26 you will find out exactly how it happened."

Question 2: "What characteristics do you consider the cause of your success?"

Answer: "The fact that I am interested in everything in the world—from emperors and prime ministers to swineherds and cats and dogs and every smallest blade of grass

that grows. I *care* about them. I feel as if we are all part of each other. I try to understand why they do things and also why they don't. I always did."

Question 3: "What led you to select your life's work?"

Answer: "I did not select. It selected me."

Question 4: "What special advice would you give me, a pupil of the eighth grade, wishing to take up the work of writing?"

Answer: "First, ask yourself *why* you want to do it. Then find out if you can do it. Try if you can tell a human story in human words, about some human thing. You can only do it by knowing in your very soul that everything, however unimportant it may seem to the rest of the world, means joy or grief to the human being to whom it happens. *Everything* is a human story, if you can see and feel it. But you cannot see and feel it merely because you would like to write a book. I believe the power depends more upon what you *are* than upon what you would like to do."

As for the rest, nobody needs to be told that to read and think about the best work the world has known and loved is part of the training.

I am answering your questions as a matter of conscience. When young people are contemplating taking up such a powerful and perilous weapon as the pen, it behooves one to try to say the right word. In your eighth grade may stand the coming great ones. Who knows? Why not? They are somewhere. Many a boy and girl wishes to be an author. . . . Some can and some can't. Some ought and some ought not.

Every one must find out for himself. . . .

FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT.

It was a habit of Frances' to slip in a short "easy" book between big ones, and, in a sense, she did this with the

novel which followed "Louisiana"—itself, however, hardly a big one. During her two visits to England she had come in touch with new phases of English life, and out of what it had observed of the methods and manners of county people the Imagination began to spin "A Fair Barbarian." This novel was her first extended expression of the internationalism which was so characteristic of her life work. To make her story she took a fresh and untrammelled American girl from the West and placed her in an English provincial town. The reaction of the stodgy people of the town to the girl's kindly, though hardly conventional ways, and the effect of their unimaginative, insincere and domineering habits upon her, produced a sparkling story that immediately delighted both American and English readers. The wit of it was here and there tinged with satire, which stung a little on both sides of the water, but the book itself so demonstrated that the author had actually lived whereof she wrote, that its truth had to be laughingly admitted, even though protested.

Henry James, with whom later in life Mrs. Burnett had a close friendship, had written his "Daisy Miller," which was considered at the time to be the work of an expatriate, who did not do justice to the American girl. It was probably not at all in Mrs. Burnett's mind to "answer" Mr. James with her "Barbarian," but she was considered, at least by some, as having done so with considerable success.

"A Fair Barbarian" first appeared in *Peterson's*. It was so good, however, that *Scribner's* did the almost unique thing of publishing it again as a serial, probably realizing that the diminishing circulation of *Peterson's* would only infinitesimally duplicate theirs.

The physical phase of the Imp of Bedevilment with which the cross fairy had surely be-spelled her at birth, began to make itself felt quite early during those Washington days, and during many long years it skulked about,

making its dashes into the foreground at the most inopportune times, and always, if not actually pinching and tweaking, hovering in the background. But the Spirit of Cadraad Haard was always present, too, and even in his most vengeful humor the Imp was rarely able entirely to subdue Frances' gaiety or sense of humor. Despite the fact that the Imp seemed to have got her by the heels, Mrs. Burnett was still writing. It was another big novel she had on the stocks.

The great success of "Louisiana" gave her confidence in her knowledge of life in America, and her ability to portray it truly. When the new big story came, it naturally was out of her American experience. She wrote about it to Gilder, who had just returned from an European trip, and, despite the malaise that dogged her she wrote with her characteristic quizzical wit:

1215 I Street,
June 1880.

My dear Mr. Gilder:

Welcome home!

I sincerely trust you have returned with all the strength you need and that Mrs. Gilder and Rodman are perfectly well. About three months ago I seemed to arrive at my breakdown. My backbone disappeared and my brain, and when I found they were really gone, I missed them. Their defection seemed so curious that I began to try to account for it and finally rambled weakly round to the conclusion that it might be because I had written ten books in six years and done two or three other little things. You have to have a reason, you know, and even a poor one is better than none.

I have about three hundred pages of a book done and generally I don't seem to care about it. There's a good deal of it in one place and another, if I could find my brains and my wrists didn't seem to dangle so.

I generally lie on my back and despise myself. Yesterday and the day before I was immensely better. Today, I'm not. I'm going to Nook Farm to spend the summer. Brains may turn up there. If any one finds them he might as well hand them over. You know that quotation from Shakespeare, "He who steals my brains, steals trash." Mine wouldn't be of any use to anyone. They are atrophied, except on the story side, where they bulge out unnecessarily in a lopsided way. I can't endure them myself.

Sometime, when I'm equal to it, and I think you are, I will send you the book. It's kind of queer and quiet and has a good deal of story in it covering a rather large area of country.

With love to Mrs. Gilder, and the best of wishes for your future health,

Yours sincerely,

F. H. Burnett.

The new book, which she "did not seem to care about," was eventually called "In Connection with the De Willoughby Claim," and was not destined to come to fruition until several years later.

The Nook Farm, referred to in the above letter, was the home of Isabella Beecher Hooker, daughter of Harriet Beecher Stowe, at Hartford, Connecticut. Mrs. Burnett's incentive for spending the summer there was the opportunity of working on her play, "Esmeralda," with the actor and playwright, William Gillette, whom she had met on her Boston trip, and who planned to stay with his sister, the wife of Charles Dudley Warner's brother William. Mrs. Burnett already had a slight acquaintance with the Warners, and there were other literary people in the vicinity, whom she either knew or knew of. So before long we find her writing to Julia, announcing her safe arrival at Nook Farm,

and proclaiming it "delightfully cool and too lovely for anything." The letter continues:

. . . I do hope you will come to see me. I was chanting your praises to young Mrs. Hooker (who is a dear little thing) yesterday and she said she hoped you would come. Mrs. Beecher's Toe [Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe] is not here at present, but will be shortly, I think,—but Mark Twain—alas! has departed to Elmira for the summer, and all my back hair has been torn up by the roots and is at present being economically made into birds' nests by the wild songsters who inhabit the surrounding groves. . . . Doro and Mr. Rice occupy themselves by sending messages of a considerately sympathetic nature—like a couple of gibbering fiends as they are, but when I have had time to cast my eye around they may possibly change their tune.

CHAPTER XIII

WASHINGTON GAIETIES

The Mr. Rice mentioned in the preceding letter was an early addition to the group of Washington intimates. He was Charles Edward Rice, a young bachelor from New England, who was in "The Departments;" the Treasury, to be exact. He was handsome, and carried about with him an atmosphere of sweet dignity and immaculateness that made him a delightful companion or guest in the home. He had a friendly way with the little boys and seemed ready at any time to take them on his capacious lap and even let them fall asleep against his shoulder, which involved, as a consequence, carrying them up the dark stairs to bed. He sang in a choir and many of the songs of his repertoire were of a religious character not suited to parlor concerts, but he would often sing "The Midshipmite," and make the young boy listeners tremble with the excitement and tragedy of the story; or "Punchinello," which was even more a cause for wet eyelashes. "Twickenham Ferry;" "In the Gloaming;" "White Wings," and all the favorites of mid-Victorian song were heard from time to time in his rolling baritone. Uncle Charlie was, therefore, a family friend of the most intimate sort, and a welcome assistant to a hard worked mother.

Just about the same time came into the intimate circle Will Dennis, William Henry Dennis being his full name—a young man who had recently settled in Washington to take up practice of law. In short order he found himself installed in the position of Young Family Solicitor, since, viewed storywise, every well conducted household should have a Family Solicitor. Usually they are old. Will Dennis

was not old, but there was considerable sedateness in his makeup, offset by an active sense of humor. He was literally a walking cyclopedia, and seemed to have dipped into almost every style and branch of literature. His specialty was Dickens, and his conversation literally perspired quotations from his favorite author. Blonde, blue eyed, and moustached, he was handsome with a kind of Anglicised Greek regularity.

As Mrs. Burnett's association with the Literary Society (called Literary Club in a letter quoted previously) developed, there were many other Washington men who sought and gained for themselves something more than the privilege of calling, Tuesday afternoons, or (which was a step further in intimacy) being asked Sunday to supper and to spend the evening, but these two were the closest family friends of this later period.

Washington, being a city of many public officials who had of necessity to keep a sort of open house, custom permitted a good deal of freedom in the making of calls, and Tuesdays saw many strangers taking their cups of tea in the small front parlor with the little hostess, who, often despite illness and fatigue, made the effort to be her vivacious best.

But Sunday night was her play time, and then the intimates gathered. The dining-room at Twelve-fifteen was far from large, and Doro had purchased a colonial sideboard of huge and bulging proportions. This had to be accommodated in that small room, with the Franklin stove and the extension dining table; so even with a small party, people were packed in tightly. Recollection of those events centres particularly and humorously upon certain "tea cakes," currant-filled, split and buttered. They harked back to English days, when in some way the Young Person had learned to make them in Islington Square.

But when Frances for the first time resurrected this culinary accomplishment, she was in some doubt as to the ingredients, and the proportion or the sequence in which they were to be "added." The guests had, however, been persuaded of the cooking prowess of their hostess; they had demanded these delicious tea cakes, and from her own hand. The kitchen was immediately back of the dining-room, and the two colored servants were out, so there was nothing for her to do but to *make those cakes*. She did, and, in defiance of all the funny-story makers, the cakes were edible, and fairly digestible.

Here is an exchange of poems between her and Gilder on the subject of those same tea cakes:

"But *when*, Mrs. B.,
Shall I come to tea,
To meet him and thee,
And the verse-making she?
R. W. G.

The "verse-making she" was doubtless Julia Schayer.

"Come early in the afternoon,—come early, Richard dear,
And see me make the tea cakes in the Springtime of the Year.
I shall put them on the table (all full of plums and seed)
At six, and you'll enjoy them, oh, very much, indeed!
But come early in the afternoon, come early, dear, to tea,
Though it's at six—at five, or four, you we'll be glad to see."

There were more elaborate functions, usually known as "Receptions." One reception which stands out as memorable, was in honor of Oscar Wilde. People in Washington were becoming highly "æsthetic"—posing and swooning and "Grecian-bending" about, wearing, perchance, a sun-flower or some other unusual blossom. Against all this as a background, of course, the visit to the city of the greatest of all æsthetes, Oscar Wilde, was an event of prime importance. And he condescended to allow himself

to be lionized at the home of Frances Hodgson Burnett! It was an afternoon affair, and he came dressed in a black silk claw-hammer coat, fancily flowered dark waistcoat, knee breeches, silk stockings, and patent leather pumps with broad buckles. An inconspicuous flower was in *his* buttonhole. Those who were there remember that the Lion and the Imagination found themselves mutually interested at once. They sat talking together in a corner for most of the afternoon, and when banteringly called to task for such procedure later by her friends, she jokingly replied, "What would you? I can see the rest of you at other times."

Speaking of one of the guests as being interesting to him because she had a "wan mouth and cavernous eyes," Wilde, on departing, left, as he usually did, a phrase for his new acquaintances to ponder over. And he left also an increased passion for the "æsthetic" in the household.

But it is fair to the taste of the Burnetts to state that the trail of Oscar, the Wilde Æsthete, was not followed for long. Doro, however, always had the collector spirit, and it first showed itself in an appreciation of antique furniture. He began to understand the beauty of the old colonial mahogany pieces and antique brasses. Soon the ugly gold-decorated walnut furniture of the "U. S. Grant" period was replaced by fine old colonial tables and chairs, sofas and bureaus. Along with these came brass andirons, fenders and candlesticks, and other colonial items of use and ornament, that quite completely changed the aspect of the home.

Clare Messer, Max Weil, and Hiram Fischer were leaders in Washington's art group, and close friends of Doro's. They gave Frances and Doro of their sketches and pictures, as well as of their society and their knowledge of art. And so the interior of the house grew.

The Literary Society was, or seemed at that time, to be, the important intellectual and social organization of Washington, and Frances Hodgson Burnett inevitably became one of its most cherished members. The meetings, held every month during the season, circled throughout the houses of the more prominent and substantial members. The more active members of the Society were naturally familiars in the Burnett household. There was the wife of General Frederick W. Lander. She was among the aristocracy that lived in Capitol Hill. She had been Jean Davenport, one of the first American child actresses, and had made a great success in the stage version of Nicholas Nickelby. There was Elizabeth Bryant Johnstone, who corresponded for Kentucky papers. She was the sister of Judge Johnstone, who was for many years President of the "Society." Senator Dawes and his daughter, Anna Dawes; Admiral Dahlgren and his wife; Elliot Coues, a scientist connected with the Smithsonian Institute, his wife, and his beautiful and talented daughter, Edith, who later, as Edith Coues O'Shaughnessy, wrote so successfully of experiences in diplomatic life; Ainsworth Rand Spofford, Librarian of Congress, his wife and daughter; Helen Nicolay, and later George Kennan were among the people who contributed to the success of the Literary Society.

It was at the Literary Society meeting, called to mourn the death of President Garfield, that Mrs. Burnett read the following poem:

(Written to be read before the Washington Society after the death of President Garfield.)

By-the-Sea, September 19, 1881.

Watchman! What of the night?
The sky is dark, my friend,
And we in heavy grief await the end.
A light is burning in a silent room,
But we—we have no light in all the gloom.

Watchman! What of the night?
Friend, strong men watch the light
With the strange mist of tears before their sight.
And women, at each hearthstone, sob and pray
That the great darkness end at last in day.

Watchman! How goes the night?
Wearily, friend, for him,
And yet, he quails not, though the light burns dim.
As bravely as he fought the field of life
He bears himself in this—the final strife.

Watchman! What of the night?
Friend, we are left no word
To tell of all the bitter sorrow stirred
In our sad souls—we stand and rail at Fate,
Who leaves hands empty and hearts desolate.

"Are pure, great souls so many in the land,
That we should lose the chosen of the band?"
We cry—but he who suffers, lies,
Meeting sharp-weaponed pain with steadfast eyes
And makes no plaint—while on the threshold Death
Half draws his keen sword from its glittering sheath,
And looking inward—pauses—lingering long,
Faltering—himself the weak before the strong.

Watchman! How goes the night?
In tears, my friend, and praise
Of his high truth and generous trusting ways,
Of which warm love and buoyant hope and faith,
Which passed life's fires, free from all blight or scathe.
Strange! We forget the laurel wreath we gave,
And only *love* him—standing near his grave.

Watchman! What of the night?
Friend, when it is past
We wonder what our grief can bring at last.
To lay upon his broad, true, tender breast
A flower whose sweetness will outlast the rest,
And this we set from all the bloom apart,
"He woke new faith and love in every heart."

Watchman! What of the night?
Would God that it were gone,

And we could see once more the rising dawn.
The darkness deeper grows—the light burns low,
There sweeps o'er land and sea a cry of woe!

Watchman! What now—what now?
Hush, friend,—*We* might say
Only that all his pain has passed away.

This poem mourned the loss of a real friend. The Garfields, during the Senator's service in Congress, had lived in the house at the northeast corner of 13th Street. There was a family of children—Abe, Irving, and Molly. Vivian and Lionel played with Abe and Irving, who were a bit older, and Molly was a kindly overseer of the play, whom they all loved. There was, of course, great excitement when Garfield was nominated for President, and the following letter from Mrs. Garfield indicates that the Burnett boys evidently went to some extremes in expressing their preference during the campaign.

Mentor, Ohio,
November 13, 1880.

My dear Mrs. Burnett:

Your letter with its enclosure is received and the General has sent off his message of recognition to brave little Kate. Tell the small boys that the account of their patriotic exploits has been read at our table and while the voters at the table all regard them as deserving great merit for their heroic efforts to endanger their lives, Mrs. Garfield is compelled to admit that her admiration is nearly all lost in sympathy for their afflicted mother, watching with terrified eyes the third story windows.

Thanks for your congratulations. General Garfield joins me in kind regards to yourself and to Doctor Burnett, and the whole family join in a round-robin of kisses to the young Republicans.

Very truly yours,
Lucretia Rudolph Garfield.

The Kate mentioned was a doughty, red-headed little playmate; Katie Jaquette, ringleader in all kinds of reckless exploits.

A little later, when the Garfields were actually in the White House, the Burnett boys were privileged guests, even to riding their newly acquired bicycles in the porches and halls, and colliding with sluggish senators and cabinet officials who were not quick enough—or were too much surprised—to be able to dodge the curly-headed gymnasts bearing down upon them.

So, when Garfield was assassinated, it was a real tragedy to the entire Burnett family, and the nation's loss, as well as her personal loss, moved Mrs. Burnett greatly.

CHAPTER XIV

A WASHINGTON NOVEL

Living in Washington through the Hayes Administration, and during the campaign in which her friend, Senator Garfield, had been elected, had given Mrs. Burnett a familiarity with things political, and an insight into the life of legislative Washington.

To her Tuesdays and Sunday evenings came Senators, Representatives, Judges, Cabinet officials, and their wives, Ministers, Ambassadors, and legation attaches. This kaleidoscope of political life began to stir the Imagination, and it received further stimulus from the amusing local social life of Washington. A bit of this stir is evident in a letter to Gilder, in the usual quizzical manner:

1215 I Street,
Saturday.

DEAR MR. GILDER:

. . . I don't see why you don't live in Washington and next door to me. Your being in New York at such a juncture is totally absurd, and it is a state of affairs I resent with all the fervor of an impassioned nature.

It was quite nice in the country to consult my taste in the selection of a President—but as I mentioned casually at the commencement of the campaign that I should be much annoyed if my candidate was defeated, it could hardly have resulted otherwise.

Would you like any little thing in foreign missions? Say —Court of St. James? If so, mention per postal.

Sincerely yours,
F. H. BURNETT.

In the autumn of 1881 she was still working upon "De Willoughby," which had started out to be an American and a Washington novel. But somehow the idea seemed to have been born without wings. She could not make the story move. How she was struggling with "De Willoughby" is shown by a letter to Gilder, written in October. After congratulating him upon being made editor of the "monthly" whose title was now changed to *The Century Magazine*, the beloved Doctor Holland having passed on, she goes on to say:

". . . The new one is developing slowly. It is an obstinate demon of a thing and that alteration of the girl's story was the most horrible performance I ever undertook. I couldn't get the creature disentangled from her first person and set her upon her feet. It was as if she had suddenly turned into twins. I do hope I shall write "Finis" by Spring, but there is an immense deal to do and I have a way of developing colds and headaches which causes me to lose all respect for myself."

But there was something very personal in her experience with Washington life that was building a new idea which did have life for her. It must have seized her to such an extent that it quickly crowded "De Willoughby" off the boards absolutely, for another letter to Gilder of not much later date runs as follows:

1215 I Street,
Sunday.

My dear Mr. Gilder:

Before making any other remark I will tell you that the "New One" flourishes and often interests me as I never expected to be interested in anything again. As it develops it pays the subtle compliment to my intelligence of proving to me that I know ever so many things I scarcely thought I knew. I don't think I ever wrote anything which seemed

so to write itself. If I had begun it last winter instead of dragging at the other fiend, it would have been in your hands now and I should have been a happy creature with a summer's rest before me instead of double labor as I have.

. . . It turned out to be the most Washington of Washington stories—thought it turned out so only because it was its fixed fate and not through the slightest intention on my part. The other one was intended to be a Washington story, and wouldn't. I have a queer feeling about this one. I don't believe I am writing it at all. It is called "Through One Administration," and begins with an inauguration and ends with one. The love story is a sad one and you can take your choice between two endings—perhaps and perhaps not. I hate and detest love stories but it seems that you must have their grinning sentimental skeletons to hang your respectable humanity and drapery upon.

"Through One Administration" was a very fine example of her habit of coining her environment into her story. Her own intimates were supplying her with suggestions or direct models for her characters, and the book was forged, so to speak, at white heat. Those who recall those days find no difficulty in tracing the character of Bertha Amory back to the author herself. She was not consciously putting herself into the book, but since it was largely an expression of Bertha Amory's reaction to Washington life, the words put into her mouth could not help but be, to a great degree, the expression of the author's own feelings and thoughts. Bertha's situation, in the book, was entirely fictitious, but the manner in which she expressed herself about it was very much the Frances Hodgson Burnett of 1880.

Charlie Rice was the "lay figure" for Arbuthnot. The Imagination slightly heightened his manner, and gave him a history, a heart, and a motivization that, to say the least,

over-expressed the man himself. Physically, however, the portrait was quite exact.

Will Dennis, somewhat more remotely, supplied the framework for the drapery which the Imagination made into a living creature as Tredennis. And then she took certain physical characteristics of Doro, and imagined a wretched soul to go with them, which she paraded through the book as Richard Amory.

The book started its serial run in *The Century*, November, 1881, and quickly proved to be one of her greatest successes. It created a group of enthusiasts for whom she always remained the author of "Through One Administration."

She was, however, at this time, almost too busy to realize this new success, for she had begun her serious work on the play of "Esmeralda." The story, "Esmeralda," also published in *The Century* some years previously, centers around a pretty little Southern girl, in love with a sweet, simple boy of her own small town, and her quite old farmer father, who are both domineered over by the termagant mother. She, much "set up" by the money the family has come into through oil discovered on the farm, drags the family over to Paris, with the intent of breaking off the village love affair; making a "swell" lady out of the girl, and marrying her off to a "Count." The simple father and daughter are helpless before this embodiment of the self-willed Southern "Ma," and three hearts are nearly broken before she is brought to the right-about.

At Nook Farm the previous year a good start had been made on the dramatization in collaboration with Will Gillette.

She now sent the boys to their grandmother, the elder Mrs. Burnett, in New Market, and started north for her summer. When she arrived in New York, she had parts of "Through One Administration" with her.

Gilder invited her to spend a week end with him and his family, but mischance intervened.

DEAR MR. GILDER:

It was not my fault in the least. I received your note at breakfast, ordered a cab for quarter to three and was ready for it and waiting, but I waited in vain.

. . . I must confess to being impatient to try the Ms. upon you, Stringed Instrument, with a view to seeing if you vibrate, and if—how and to what extent.

Yours sincerely,

FRANCES H. BURNETT.

The visit did take place a little later, as explained in a letter to Julia:

Long Beach Hotel,
Long Beach, L. I.

MY DEAR GIRL:

. . . There seemed no where else for me to go but this particular spot, and through the amiable machinations of our mutual dear R. W. G., I was enabled to make comparatively decent terms, though, of course, they are not to be mentioned on any account, etc. In the first place, I staid two weeks in New York and was very hot and uncomfortable—but one day R. W. G. and I eloped together and dined at Martinelli's, but when he asked me to go down with him the next day on the boat to Milton, where Mrs. Gilder and Rodman were staying—and my carriage did not come and I actually was kept in the city, and then it was arranged that I was to go down on Saturday and remain over the Fourth.

. . . When we were at Milton one day, R. W. said to his wife, "See here, Helena, could I take this girl down to Long Beach and keep her all night? Would it be proper and all that sort of thing?" And Helena said, "Certainly it

would. You couldn't do it if she was not married, but under the circumstances it is perfectly proper." And then R. W. G. and myself exchanged frivolous remarks and I regarded it rather as a joke and forgot about it, but "Lo en beholes!" as Uncle Remus says, when I met him at the train the creature inquired where my satchel was and to my utter amazement it turned out that we were really to stay all night—and we did—and of all the lovely times!

We rambled about on the beach and grubbed in the sand and then went back to the hotel (only a few yards from the beach) and dined on the immense piazza, and then went back to the beach and sat in the sand again and bayed at the moon and talked and talked and talked, and I sang little songs, and things loomed up generally as they haven't for a long time, and we sat there until midnight and then went and had lemonade on the porch, and he said he was afraid to leave me for fear I would say something interesting after he was gone and finally we retired, and as all our baggage consisted of one small pocket-comb, we had to perform our toilets with it by turns—he throwing it over my transom, and I returning it under his door.

. . . I talked to Mr. Gilder of you and told him all the lovely things you would *not* have said to him of me, you worst of girls!

Mr. Gillette comes out to me and we are convinced that we are working on the play—only the sea and the sand and the sky and things, don't you know? This morning we simply played with sand and he said it rested him to look at my tennis suit, which he is amiable enough to think one of the prettiest things he ever saw. Yes, dearest, I know what you are saying in your little mind, but when I tell you in confidence that he is engaged to be married and things, and is supposed to be densely in love, you will know he is quite safe and accusations are quite needless.

. . . I wrote to Doro and Charlie yesterday to tell them they might fill my place with another person of equal attractions if they could find her, and I was hopelessly enslaved by a member of the band, but today I find I was mistaken in my feelings, it is the leader who has enslaved me by the beautiful manner in which he gazed at me—or somebody else—while he led Schubert's Serenade in the most impassioned style.

FRANCES.

The stay at Long Beach did much for the Imagination—incidentally stimulating it to considerable gay letter-writing, mostly to Julia. In one of these letters Frances writes at length about "a most becoming bathing suit" and about a "Greek God in bronze," who proves to be the local bathing-master.

". . . He . . . is the most wonderful creature. His physique is perfection, simple and pure. I never noticed a man's body before. I was always so actively employed searching for their brains—but his—Mon dieu! Gott im Himmel! Santa Maria—and things! He wears a dark blue woven, tight-fitting garment, reaching to the knee, and leaving his superb arms and divine antique legs bare. He has a head like—Oh, like Augustus Caesar, etc., close, crisp hair and a Neopolitan fisherman's close, dark blue cap on it. And that is not the worst of it, either. The color of him, Julia, the color of him! He is sunburned all over—the most exquisite, pure bronze! I grow wild, and have to erase!—and far be it from me to presume to ask him how much it is a lesson."

"Esmeralda," the play, was finished, and soon found a producer. It was a comparatively young man named Daniel Frohman. And it found a theatre, too; the Madison Square, recently opened by a long run of "Hazel Kirke," in

ANNIE RUSSELL IN "ESMERALDA"

Annie Russell was largely responsible for the popularity of Mrs. Burnett's first successful play, which ran 350 nights at the Madison Square Theatre, New York, under the direction of young Dan Frohman. (From the Houdini Collection.)

every way the most beautiful and perfectly equipped theatre in the country. It had a movable double stage, was fire-proof, and had been decorated in the most advanced style by leading craftsmen of the world.

The play, opening October 26, 1881, made an immediate success. The "Esmeralda" was Annie Russell, and it was largely upon her success in this part that she built her later fame. The hero, "Dave Hardy," was Eben Plympton; the father, "Elbert Rogers," was Leslie Allen, and some of the minor characters were taken by Thomas Whiffen, Agnes Booth, May Gallagher, and Kate Denin Wilson. Later Viola Allen made her first appearance as "Esmeralda." The play established a record of 350 nights, and did not close until October 7, 1882.

The success of "Esmeralda" was gratifying to Mrs. Burnett, because it proved to her that she could successfully write for the stage. It laid the foundation of her reputation as a playwright. Will Gillette, her collaborator, in a quite recent letter to the biographer, said, "Your mother did most of the work on that dramatization. I merely gave her advice on the 'layout' of the scenes."

With "Esmeralda" running to full houses every night, and "Through One Administration" piling up success as a serial in *The Century*, the young authoress came to the end of 1881, able to congratulate herself upon a fair year's work.

These next few years in Washington might be called her "salad days." As a child, her favorite expression of approval was "what larks!" and these were the days of "larks," even though she was most persistently pursued by her Imp of malaise—nervous prostration, as she usually called it.

The Tuesdays were crowded; the Sunday suppers were cosey and brilliant, and the Literary Society was setting a fast and furious pace. And Mrs. Burnett was quite at the

centre of all this. In her group were more of politicoes than usually were mixed in Washington gatherings, for there was a tendency for political and social Washington to keep apart.

The Burnett family was beginning at this time to establish summer connections with Boston and vicinity. Some refuge from the blistering heat of the Washington summers had always been necessary for Frances, who was exhausted by it. There had been short summers at "Nook Farm," resorts to the Grandmother Burnett at New Market for the children, and visits for her here and there with friends. With the arrival of greater affluence, it was possible to make more extensive plans for the family's summering at a "watering place," and Lynn, on the north shore of Massachusetts Bay was selected, probably because of Mrs. Landor, of Capitol Hill, having a summer home there. The first choice for lodgings fell upon the Red Rock House, and the family was housed in one of the small, wooden, dark-red-painted cottages, clustered about the typical frame hotel with a broad piazza, which stood close to the rocks out on the point, and commanded a fine sea view over the open ocean, including Nahant and Egg Rock lighthouse.

This summer of 1882 was one of complete rest for the writer. Its only incident of importance came toward the end, when Lionel, watching some one flying a kite, walked backward over a high sea wall, and was picked up, bleeding and unconscious, on the rocks below. His hurts were not serious, but "Dearest" received a severe shock.

The winter following was more of a social than a working one. There were the proofs to be read of the final instalments of "Through One Administration," completed in the April, 1883, *Century Magazine*. With money enough coming in to keep the wolf from the door, she did not feel the necessity just then of forcing herself to write against the

odds of illness. Doro's practice was growing, and though he gave a large proportion of his time to charity and hospital service, he was able to carry most of the family expenses. So she rested, and wrote little during this and the years immediately following.

In the summer of 1883 the family took Camp Cottage, on the General Lander property, in Lynn, a flimsy wooden structure at the edge of the beach. The joys of the previous summer were repeated, emphasized by the fact that this little house was virtually right on the sands, and in the midst of the roar of the Atlantic waves. There was, however, one grief to this summer. Dearest was not well. This was plain, even to the boys, who had never known her other than a gay, laughing companion. She spent much time in the hammock and she did not seem to be able to take part in their plays, or to care very much about them.

Already she had come into contact with some of the new philosophies such as Spiritualism and Theosophy, and this led her to an interest in the new idea of Mind-Healing. During this summer she made her first trial of this new curative method. It was without much success, but in one way or another she followed this line of thinking ever afterward in her life, associating herself with many different schools.

Back to Washington, still ill, for the winter of 1883, she did her best to enjoy life.

There was much poetry-writing going on in Washington at this time, ranging from the pseudo-sublime to the ridiculous. For that matter, it seemed to be a poetry period all over America. And since not only the *Century* editors, but most of the people she encountered, in Boston, New York, and elsewhere, were expressing themselves in verse, it was not strange that Mrs. Burnett's natural inclination in that direction should come to the fore. As might have been expected, much of the verse is frankly humorous. The

manner of the Austin Dobson school often suited her trend of mood; and much of the Dobsonian daintiness and quaintness are patterned in "Point d'Alençon" (*Century Magazine*, 1887), verses echoing with "the dear frou-frou of trailing silks and laces." In much more serious vein is the poem entitled "Great Love and I," (*Century Magazine*, August, 1886).

Another poem of this period, and perhaps the one most characteristic of her lighter vein, is "What the Pug Knew." Along with sunflowers à la Wilde, lambrequins and jig-saw wood-work, pugs were fashionable at this time. Mrs. Burnett not only acquired a real live pug—named Marquis, as suited to the hauteur of his nose-lifted expression—but also a whole family of haughty china pugs, which adorned the black lacquer cabinet on her writing-table in the den, with a lordly daddy pug in the centre. Frances promptly made him into an individuality, and wrote a poem picturing Mr. Pug's disdain of his mistress' flippant manners, which was exceedingly popular when discreetly read among her intimates.

Taken altogether, the literary output of the early 80's was small. Yet, though these seemed like fallow times, there was going on a storing up which was valuable. She had been writing such children's stories as "Behind the White Brick," "The Proud Little Grain of Wheat," and "Editha's Burglar," which were making her the leading writer of stories for children, and creating a great juvenile audience for her. And this was all preparation for a coming success, which was in a measure as much of a surprise to her as to her friends, and the literary world in general.

CHAPTER XV

DEAREST AND HER CHILDREN

The Imagination's sweetest and most complete romance was her children. It was the romance, too, which held her most poignant tragedy, the death of Lionel. She declared again and again, "The one perfect thing in my life was the childhood of my boys." Concerning the responsibilities of motherhood, she had characteristic convictions which were the result of long and deep thought.

Her pattern was the Fairy Godmother, and her guiding principle, Love. The precious thing of all to her was the mutual human affection, and she sought to preserve it and make it grow through an infinite kindliness and consideration. To be a gay, helpful, understanding companion to her little boys, was the ideal for which she strove, and not to have been considerate, not to have understood, to have added one ounce to the weight of the smallest of their childish woes, would have been crimes long to accuse herself for committing.

That queer little roll-top desk, of walnut, with decorations in gold lines and dots, which stood in the Den, is associated with the first expressions of the affection which existed between the boys and their mother. Much of the fervor of this relationship is expressed in this excerpt from an article she wrote for a woman's magazine under the title of "How Fauntleroy Occurred":

". . . There was, in a certain sacred workroom at the top of the house, a receptacle known as the 'treasure drawer.' It was always full of wonderful things, rich gifts brought carefully and with lavish generosity from the grass

in the back yard, from the dust heaps, from the street, from anywhere; bits of glass or pebble, gorgeous advertising cards, queerly-shaped twigs or bits of wood, pictures out of papers, small queer toys, possessing some charm which which might make them valuable to an appreciative maternal relative. And just before they were presented I always heard the small feet on the stairs, the knock on the door, and the delightful, confiding voice outside,——

"'Please may I come in? I've brought a treasure for you, dearest.'

"We always spoke of them as 'treasures.' They seemed so beautiful and valuable to the donor that love brought them at once as a gift to love, and the recipient saw them with his own eyes."

The "treasure drawer" was in that roll-top desk. How stuffed it became in time! Dearest confessed in after years that she secretly had to remove lower and forgotten layers of treasures to accommodate the new precious gifts.

The love between the boys and their mother was of the cosiest, most confiding kind. They never thought of keeping anything from her, and were sure that she never kept anything from them. They had implicit faith in everything she said to them; and this was thoroughly justified, for one of the foremost articles of her creed was never to fail in fulfilling a promise. Part of her educational plan was to direct their interest along worth-while lines, and, with Doro's assistance, she was distinctly successful in this. As they grew to their teens the boys chiefly occupied their time in electrical experimenting and construction, photography, and, for a long period, in printing, in which they achieved, with their father as coadjutor, a quite professional craftsmanship.

Among the few unpublished manuscripts of Mrs. Burnett's is one, "His Friend," which had as its inspiration the

tragedy of Lionel. The following extract from it expresses vividly her point of view about her children:

". . . His earliest recollections were of days when he and his younger brother had somehow seemed to have a delightful place among the groups of kind and charming people who filled his mother's drawing room. Their mother had told them they were allowed to come in because people were so kind and liked little boys who were amiable and well mannered. They had accepted this explanation and had inwardly resolved to earn a continuance of public favor by good behavior. Fortunately they did not suspect that their picturesque little figures, their falling golden love locks and their dark eyes had an attraction which at the outset was almost equal to that of juvenile morals.

". . . When he and his brother had been children in the nursery, they had had an idea that after all their mother was a sort of little girl. She was little to look at and had curly hair like their own; and she used to sit on the nursery floor and build houses or play marbles or 'fish pond' with them and they enjoyed themselves with her most of all.

"She could make them laugh so much and could tell such queer stories and invent such new things to do. There was one thing she had told them which they liked very much and which remained a half jesting legend even when they had grown old enough to know it had been only a sort of loving, consoling pretence.

"She had told it first one tragic hour when Leo [Lionel] had broken a favorite toy. He had carried it in his hand, wailing piteously—perhaps on the whole rather roaring than wailing—to the room where she sat at work.

"'My horsey's leg has broken off,' he cried as he opened the door and rushed to her to bury his anguish on her knee.

"She saw that it was a most fearful catastrophe—so dreadful indeed that only some rapid new invention created

on the spot, could make it bearable. She understood the depths of nursery woes and felt their weight herself.

"She took the little fellow up and hugged him close to her breast.

"'But have you forgotten?' she said, smiling as she kissed him, and filling her eyes with a look of great surprise, 'Or don't you really know?'

"There was a sound in her voice which made him lift his head to look up at her. He knew that was the voice that always meant that she was going to tell him something captivating and new.

"'What?' he said mournfully though his roar had stopped, 'What, Mammieday?'

"She gave him a little shake.

"'Don't you know,' she said, 'that Mammieday is a fairy? Don't you know that?'

"A questioning smile began to grow in his large eyes. He knew all about fairies. They played at being fairies sometimes, and there were lovely stories about them. Was she in earnest or was it a joke to make him laugh?

"'Don't you know,' she went on, 'that when you lose anything and you are so disappointed it makes you cry, Mammie can always find it? And when you fall down and scratch your knees or bump your head she can always make the place well? She just gives it some warm soft fairy kisses and it gets all right in a minute; and if you have a tiresome little pain, when she takes you on her knee and rubs you gently it goes away; and if it rains and you are not having fun in the nursery, when Mammie comes in and stirs up the fire and begins to play, the toys all get nice again and you enjoy yourself; and if you notice, when you want anything very much she always finds it when she goes to town. That's because she is a Fairy—a real live Fairy. And when your playthings have got broken before what has she done?'

"He put both his arms round her and pressed his cheek against her breast and hugged her with a contented, exhilarated little laugh.

"She laughed herself and gave back the hug with interest.

"'She has a little fairy wand,' she said in a mysterious whisper. 'And a little fairy bottle; and when anything is broken, if she puts the wand into the bottle for a second and then touches the broken part with it, in a few moments it grows together. Just think of being a boy with a Fairy for a Mammie!'

". . . They did not themselves know how much this fancy meant to her; that to her it was not only a pretty fiction but the expression of a longing in her heart.

"'. . . They must be happy,' she would say to herself. 'Their lives must be as bright as I can make them; as far as lives can be perfect, I must make them so. Nothing must be lacking.'

"It was not only that they must have all childish and boyish pleasures, but that they must have all things and experiences that would make the best of them mentally and physically.

". . . They travelled in foreign countries and learned foreign languages because they heard them spoken and being clever picked them up. They did not know that the travelling was part of the plan to equip them and that when they went for boyish fun and pleasure to great exhibitions, to palaces, to picture galleries, and to great manufactories of all sorts, it was the Fairy way of preparing them to be men.

". . . In the cities they saw everything worth seeing, and walked through the streets taking in everything with their wide open quick eyes; in the country they were turned loose like young colts to enjoy themselves, and assisted at vintages, at hay making, at shearing, at hop gathering and

drying. They were perfectly at home in London or Paris, in Berlin.

". . . They had French tutors, Italian ones, English ones, but their idea had been that these had been to simply fit them to return to their school in America to keep up with the 'other fellows,' and it was their advance in their studies 'at home' which they counted and relied on seriously.

"'And I like you to care for America' their mother said, smiling at their enthusiastic discussions sometimes—discussions which always ingenuously and ardently proved that the next thing to being an archangel was to be an American. 'If you had been born in England I should be ashamed of you if you were not good Englishmen—as you were born in America I should be ashamed if you were not good Americans.'"

This was her vision—this was the Plan—and whatever else it produced, it certainly produced in the boys adoration of their mother.

A little incident recorded by a Mrs. Clark, which occurred in the early 1880's, while the Burnett family was staying with a Mrs. Nutting, in North Andover, Mass., shows that this almost story-book relation between mother and boys was genuine. It recounts:

"Mrs. Burnett was not well and did not get up, nor did she wish to be disturbed by the morning play of the boys. When the throwing of pillows and general romping was at its height, a friend asked the little boys to be quiet on account of their mother. 'Oh,' said Vivian, 'we wouldn't disturb Dearest for the world.' But after the door was shut they forgot their good intentions and again became hilarious. Mrs. Burnett stepped from her bed and appeared to them in the doorway. 'Now, Dearest,' said Vivian, (the younger) 'if you *are* going to whip us, just put your

little bare feet right on this,' at the same time stripping a pillow from his bed and spreading it before her. Dearest said that was quite enough. She just kissed them both, and went back to bed."

Doro, who was building up a successful practice in Washington, was able to contribute much to the boys' development. Interested in all things worth while, literary, artistic, and scientific, he had much that was solid and definite to pass on to his sons, which he did with a sweetness and affection as fine in their way as the mother's more passionate and romantic devotion. He believed more in the Spartan method, and used often to say, when the boys were asking urgently for something: "Well, I would not give much for a boy who couldn't make something out of a chunk of wood that would do as well."

With all she had to do, Mrs. Burnett might easily have considered herself justified in leaving the personal care of the boys to the help in the house. Her daily scrubbings included a minute, and, it might seem, too vigorous searching of "the corners" into which a small boy in a hurry might not think it necessary to go after grime. The daily brushing and curling of their long hair was a somewhat mixed pleasure. Dearest, it is sure, thoroughly enjoyed the event. It was a sort of sacrament of mother worship in which no doubt the fragrance of the laddies' hair was a sort of incense. She somewhere speaks of her delight in feeling the "warm little body" pressing against her knee. And, to cap the climax, she had the added joy of her beloved art—story-telling.

The real feature of these events, from the boys' point of view, was the "Hair Curling Story." The name has a delusive suggestion, for the stories were not fierce, but, on the contrary, Dearest made her inspiration purr as gently as possible, and produced tales wonderfully adapted to

hold fast the attention of six and seven year old boys and divert it from the anguish of tangles that would pull, even if handled ever so gently. Chief among these stories was one called "The Good Wolf," which developed into a thrilling and perpetual serial.

It was her passionate desire that her boys should appear comely, and for that reason she took great delight in dressing them with individuality. They wore for a time, blue jersey suits with red sashes and red jersey caps, and later on, "best" suits of velvet, with lace collars, and this costume became part of the Fauntleroy character. Such originality, of course, aroused comment, and the newspaper men of Washington, when called upon to write articles about the Burnett family, usually took liberty with the actual facts. Mrs. Burnett rarely engaged in a newspaper controversy, but she did take up her pen in a communication to the press anent the tradition that her boys were dressed, and posed about the room to impress strangers, and this was the outcome:

"About four years ago, when the ages of my little boys were, respectfully, six and seven, the item I enclose was first published.

"It seemed to so endear itself to newspapers that it has been since then copied repeatedly, and finally it has been suggested by my friends that I enter some slight protest against it.

". . . I have, it is true, two little boys. I have also a mantel piece and a rug, but the four objects are not compatible in the manner described, as the mantel piece is rather high for the elbows of six and seven, and that even six and seven years of the most careful training have failed to instill into the boys that delicate respect for the truly artistic which would lead them to lie on a rug in one position, however distinctly beautiful, for two seconds unless

VIVIAN

Picture taken in the summer of 1884 and sent to Reginald Birch as a suggestion for the illustrations of "Little Lord Fauntleroy."

they were chained and padlocked; and to this last device I have not yet, even in my most artistic maternal agonies, had recourse.

"That the little boys have been beautiful has not been my fault nor their misfortune. Their tendency to pose I have sometimes had reason to regret. I have seen them pose in attitudes replete with grace, suspended by their feet from apple trees with their hyacinthine locks sweeping the dust and having somewhat the appearance of an entirely new species of yellow mop. I have seen them pose upon one foot upon the top of an iron-spiked fence; I have seen them pose on adjacent roofs, their purely Greek countenances aglow with rapt contemplation of the thought that at least they had attained an altitude which a mis-step would cause to result in their being dashed into minute fragments; and a maternal feebleness has led me at such times to deplore this rooted tendency to the ideal, the sublime and the beautiful in posturing.

". . . A few summers ago, one newspaper announced that Mrs. Burnett very sensibly refrained from trammelling her beautiful boys with any unnecessary clothing, and that among her neighbors they were known as the young Arabs. I spent some moments in absorbed reflection upon this paragraph. My beautiful boys and I have but one slight difference of opinion; that is upon the question of what amount of clothing is strictly necessary. My mild arguments have so far usually been refuted by more irresistible ones. Their theory, possibly founded upon their artistic instinct and studious daily contemplation of the antique marbles is, that all clothing is unnecessary, as witness the Apollo Belvedere, and that therefore, the sooner it is left in fragments fluttering in the perfumed zephyrs of the spring upon the fences, trees, tree-boxes, etc., the sooner it is lost in the form of hats, worn into dilapidated disgrace

in the shape of shoes, and shorn of its buttons in any guise whatever, the better for all art in its highest and most noble ideals.

". . . That the little fellows have worn velvet and lace, and being kindly endowed by Nature, have so adorned it as to fill a weak parent with unbridled vanity, before which peacocks might retire, is true, but I object to their being handicapped in their childhood by stupid, vulgar, unfounded stories, and I advance with due modesty the proposition that my taste for the picturesque has not led me to transform two strong, manly, robust boys into affected, abnormally self-conscious, little mountebanks."

CHAPTER XVI

"LITTLE LORD FAUNTLEROY"

And so she wrote "Little Lord Fauntleroy." It was the most natural possible outcome of a mother-feeling such as she had, and of her genius for turning all persons and things in her surroundings into stories. Dearest herself is, of course, the best authority on this subject, and she gives her version of the matter in "How Fauntleroy Occurred."

"It has always been rather interesting to me to remember that he first presented himself in an impenetrable disguise. It was a disguise sufficiently artful to have disarmed the most wary. I, who am not at all a far-sighted person, was completely taken in by him. I saw nothing to warrant in the slightest degree any suspicion that he had descended to earth with practical intentions; that he furtively cherished plans of making himself into the small hero of a book, the picturesque subject of illustrations, the inspiration of a fashion in costume, the very *jeune première* in a play over which people in two continents would laugh and cry.

". . . He had been clever enough to disguise himself as a baby, a quite new baby in violet powder and a bald head and a florid complexion. He had even put on small, indefinite features and entirely dispensed with teeth, besides professing inability to speak, a fastidious simplicity of taste in the matter of food which limited him to the most inocuous milk diet. But beneath this disguise there he lurked, the small individual who, seven years later—apparently quite artlessly and unconsciously—presented

his smiling, ingenuous little face to the big world and was smiled back upon by it—Little Lord Fauntleroy.

"We were, of course, obliged to give him time, and he wasted none of it. One of the favorite jokes was that he was endeavoring to ingratiate himself with us, and by a strict attention to business to merit future patronage.

". . . But it was when he was only seven that Fauntleroy really occurred. He had been so amusing and interesting that summer, and I had reflected upon him so much. Every few days I heard some delightful anecdote about him, or saw him do something incomparably quaint. What led me most into speculation was the effect he invariably produced upon people, touching little fascinations he exercised.

"'Do you know I never saw a child like him?' said a clever man of the world who had spent an hour talking to him.

". . . He was such a patriotic young American; he was so engaged in an impending presidential election at the time; his remarks were so well worth hearing! I began, among other fancies about him, to imagine his making them with that frankly glowing face to conservative English people.

"'. . . When a person is a duke,' he had said to me once, 'what makes him one? What has he done?' His opinion evidently was, that dukedoms were a species of reward for superhuman sweetness of character and brilliant intellectual capacity. I began to imagine the interest that would be awakened in his mind by the contemplation of ducal personages.

"It amused me to analyze the subject of what his point of view would be likely to be. I knew it would be productive of immense entertainment to his acquaintances. . . . Would he seem 'a cheeky little beggar' to less republican minds than his own? I asked myself this curiously. But

no, I was sure he would not. He would be so simple. He would expect such splendour of mind and of noble friendliness that the hypothetical duke would like him as Dan and Carrie did, and he would end by saying, 'My friend, the Duke of Blankshire,' as affectionately as he had said, 'My friend, the milkman.'

"It was only a thread of fancy for a while, but one day I had an idea.

"'I will write a story about him,' I said. 'I will put him in a world quite new to him and see what he will do. How shall I bring a small American boy into close relationship with an English nobleman—irascible, conservative, disagreeable? He must live with him, talk to him, show him his small, unconscious, republican mind. He will be more effective if I make him a child who has lived in the simplest possible way. Eureka! Son of younger son, separated from ill-tempered noble father because he has married a poor young American beauty. Young father dead, elder brothers dead, boy comes into title! How it would amaze him and bewilder him! Yes, there it is, and Vivian shall be he—just Vivian with his curls and his eyes, and his friendly, kind, little soul. Little Lord Something-or-other. What a pretty title—Little Lord—, Little Lord—, what?'

"And a day later it was Little Lord Fauntleroy. A story like that is easily written. In part it was being lived before my eyes.

". . . Almost every day I recorded something he had said or suggested.

"And how delightful it was to read the manuscript to him and his brother. He used to sit in a large arm-chair holding his knee or with his hands in his pockets.

"'Do you know,' he said to me once, 'I like that boy? There's one thing about him, he never forgets about Dearest.'

"When the first appearance of the false claimant occurred he turned quite pale; so did his brother.

"'Oh, dearest!' they gasped, 'why did you do that? Oh, don't do it!'

"'What will he do?' the occupant of the arm-chair asked. 'Won't he, dearest, be the Earl's boy any more?'

"'That other boy,' said Fauntleroy tremulously, to Lord Dorincourt, the next day, (in the story) 'he will have to—to be your boy now—as I was—won't he?'

"'No,' answered the Earl, and he said it so fiercely that Cedric quite jumped.

"'Shall I be your boy even if I'm not going to be an earl?' he said. 'Shall I be your boy just as I was before?'

"But it was a real little heart that had beaten at the thought. He had been considered such an ideal little person—Cedric Errol, Lord Fauntleroy—and he was so real after all. Perhaps it is worth while explaining that he was only a simple, natural thing—a child, whose great charm was that he was the innocent friend of the whole world."

"Fauntleroy" was written because it was asked for; it was a sort of offering to the boys to "make things even" with them. Dearest was, as we have seen, really a hard-working person, and, when she was well enough to write, she went up to the Den on the third floor, immediately after breakfast. That she should be shut away from them so often during those precious play hours of the early morning, was a trial to the boys. And one evening, at the dinner table, Vivian gave expression to his feelings.

"Dearest," he said, "you write so many books for grown-ups, that we don't have any time at all with you now. Why don't you write some books that little boys would like to read? Then your staying up-stairs wouldn't be so bad."

Although this remark presented a point of view which seemed not to have been considered by Dearest, she was

as understanding as usual. Her reply indicated that she hadn't realized how her work was taking her from the boys, and that if they thought writing a story for them would make amends, she would do it.

Just before the "Fauntleroy" period, Gertrude Hall, and the whole cultured Hall family, came into her life. In 1884, owing to her illness, which by this time had become a real nervous prostration, Mrs. Burnett had remained in the North after the boys had gone back to school in Washington. She took rooms at the Vendome Hotel, on Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, and among those who came to visit her was Maria S. Porter, who claimed some distant relationship with Henry Ward Beecher. It was Mrs. Porter who introduced her to the Halls.

The home of Madam Edna Hall was in Dartmouth Street. She had been a well-known concert singer, and had established herself in Boston as a singing-teacher. Marguerite (known as Daisy), her eldest daughter, later achieved a fine reputation as a concert and oratorio contralto. The other daughters were Gertrude (Kitty) and Grace (Gigi). The daughters were all talented; Grace was interested in painting, while Gertrude was working on her volume, "Verses," which was later most favorably reviewed in *The Atlantic* by William Dean Howells. Kitty's exquisite literary taste, backed by a wide reading in the literatures of many languages, provided a stimulus that Mrs. Burnett needed and thoroughly appreciated.

The friendship with the Halls developed rapidly, and Mrs. Burnett soon became a constant visitor in the Dartmouth Street home. The latter part of February she returned to Washington to prepare for the festivities incident to the inauguration of Grover Cleveland, and Kitty Hall came with her to be her guest during that interesting period. It was then that her idea of writing the story about

Vivian took possession of her. An interesting document bearing on the event is preserved—a sheet of manuscript paper, with "Little Lord Fauntleroy" written on it in a column about ten times, and the following paragraph in her handwriting:

"He was such a handsome, blooming, curly-headed little fellow that when he sat down and nursed his knee with his chubby hands and conversed with such guileless wisdom, his hearers were always tempted to lead him on asking him questions to see what he would say." On the sheet is the name "Vivian Burnett," in Kitty Hall's handwriting.

No satisfactory explanation of her choice of the name Fauntleroy was ever given. It is not uncommon in England, and from a Mr. Robert Fauntleroy, not long after the story began to have its big success, she received the following letter:

My dear Madam:

Your most delightful story has so pleased many of my friends with its graceful style, tender teachings, and pleasant thoughts, that I am induced, tho' really a very shy man, to venture a question to your good Ladyship what really were the reasons for fixing on my name? I had the pleasure of knowing several popular authors, now passed away, who have told me the trouble names sometimes are. We have a clear pedigree back to 1357, and when, in 1862 (I think it was) I had the pleasure of opening my Chamber Door in Garden Court Temple (the *very set* my friend Dickens fixed for Pip in "Great Expectations") to one of our kinsmen from Virginia, an officer in the (then) Confederate Navy, Captain Charles Fauntleroy, we had a long gossip as to our ancestors. . . . I have some old books of accounts detailing how we used, from 1730 to 1880, to send out periodically suits of our scarlet livery (with buttons) for our relations'

servants. Those in Virginia left England shortly after the decisive Battle of Worcester more than 200 years ago. . . .

Believe me,
Very heartily yours,
ROBERT FAUNTLEROY.

I have two sisters who, like myself, have *no children.* They each married widowers, each with *two little ones,* boys the eldest; I think our English branch will die out, unless I marry and have a son.

Oct. 13, 1886.
Vale House,
Sutherland Gardens,
London W.

In Fauntleroy, as in most of her other books, the people about her suggested the characters. The jovial and philosophic corner-grocery man, Mr. Hobbs, had his origin in Vivian's friend, Mr. Page, the owner of the grocery on the corner of Twelfth Street and New York Avenue. Only the suggestion of the character was there, however, for Mr. Page himself, far from being a rotund and jovial tradesman, was a New England type, a Vermonter whose reserved exterior concealed a kind heart. He did, however, have cracker-boxes, and small boys did sit upon them and converse with him in a friendly manner upon rather large subjects. There were also certain friends of Lionel's in the bootblack business, whose sterling honesty was admired by him, and commented upon to his mother, and these were probably the prototype of the "Dick" in the book. It would, of course, have been impossible for her not to have put much of her own ideals of motherhood into Dearest, and to that extent it might be said that the character was drawn from herself.

Written during the fall of 1884 and the spring of 1885,

the story appeared as a serial in *St. Nicholas*, the first instalment being in the November, 1885, number. In a letter to Kitty, dated June 2, 1885, she announces that she is reaching the end:

DEAR LITTLE TALL GERTRUDE:

It is quite seven months and sixteen days since you went away and this morning I am going to write the last words of Little Lord Fauntleroy, and then I am going to the dressmakers, and then I am going to take up carpets and scrub floors and clean windows, so that I can come to Boston.

This is not a letter, it is just to say "Dear little tall Gertrude" to you. . . .

Mrs. Burnett, and Mary Mapes Dodge, the editor of *St. Nicholas*, had become fast friends in the years intervening since the famous trip to Boston. The fruit of the friendship had been the short stories contributed to *St. Nicholas* by Mrs. Burnett, including "Editha's Burglar." When the serial of "Fauntleroy" started it was eagerly welcomed by a host who were already her friends. The editors made a very happy choice of an illustrator, Reginald Birch. He was delightfully successful in capturing the winsome charm of the little hero, the rather fierce dignity of the old Earl, the graceful sweetness of Dearest, and the comedy of old Mr. Hobbs. A small photograph of Vivian, in velvet suit, lace collar, and cuffs and a sash, which had been taken in Lynn the previous summer, was sent to Mr. Birch as a suggestion of what the author had in mind, and out of that he created the slim-legged little figure that came to stand for Little Lord Fauntleroy. His pictures, besides being true illustrations that appealed to young eyes and old, were finely decorative, and made a definite contribution to the success of the book.

The book, with Birch's illustrations, was published in 1886 by Charles Scribner's Sons. Its sales reached proportions at that time unusual for a children's story, and began to produce royalties that far outdistanced any that the already well-known authoress had received on novels for adults that were called highly successful. The financial stress in the Burnett family began to be less, especially as Doctor Burnett had continued to develop his practice and was by this time professor in Georgetown University, as well as on the staff of the important local hospitals. He had, in fact, put himself quite at the head of the eye-and-ear specialists in the South, besides having published several authoritative books on problems relating to refraction in the eye.

Returning to Washington for the winter of 1885, Mrs. Burnett continued her activity in the juvenile field. She began to write "Sara Crewe, or What Happened at Miss Minchin's," but ill health was still harassing her, and that little story did not appear in *St. Nicholas* until December of 1887.

The rising family fortunes, however, made a change of home in Washington seem desirable. The city was growing steadily toward the northwest, and the district about Twelve-fifteen I Street was deteriorating rather than improving with the rest of the town. In the spring of 1886 a lease was taken on one of twin houses in the brighter northwest district, 1734 K Street, and a new ménage started there.

Washington, April 1886.

My dee Kitty:

It is because I have been *so* busy and now I am going to be busier than ever—Guess what? We are going into a new house and such a lovely sweet dear of a house—pretty in everything—with charming rooms and hall fireplace

(which represents all architectural perfection to me) and shelves over the mantels and inlaid floors and stained glass, and *all* the modern improvements. And it is going to be made worthy of my Kitten when she comes to see me. It is in a delightful quarter—just off Connecticut Avenue. and the mere thought of it makes me better.

Did I tell you, I found some money waiting me here—and I had nearly six hundred from England a few days ago, and so I shall be able to support life a little longer. You will so like the house—it is a little bonbonniere.

. . . The boys are *angels*. I know there never were such sweet, tender, loving, thoughtful little darlings in the world. They take perfect care of me and kiss me every five minutes, and enliven me by reading *jokes* out of their "Golden Days."

Yours *always*,

FLUFFY.

But Mrs. Burnett was destined to spend but little of her time in this house—in fact, she did no writing there, beyond the finishing up of "Sara Crewe" and turning out short articles for some of the popular magazines.

It was at this period that she first met the energetic young S. S. McClure, whose plan for syndicating writings by well-known authors was beginning to bear fruit. He came to her with a big scheme for a syndicated Children's Page, and his personal charm, his romantic vision, and his unbounded enthusiasm won with her as they did with every one. He convinced her that with her name at the head of the page it would have a great influence for good and great success. For several years her name was used by his syndicate.

There was at least one incident that added to the drama of her life while in this K Street house. It is detailed in this letter to Kitty:

1734 K Street, Washington, D. C.
Tuesday.

No, my own Kitty, your Fluffy is not "burned to a crips" — . . . but there are a hundred chances to one that if the fire had broken out in the night while we slept that this might have been the case. We were just beneath it and the whole garret was in roaring flames, and we peacefully reading until a little boy in the street rang our bell and announced to us that we were on fire.

I was in bed—having retired immediately after dinner because I felt very tired. Dr. Burnett ran up into the attic—I followed with a pitcher of water, but it was already beyond anything but fire engines and hose. The servants went mad and shrieked alternately, "Oh, my God," and "Oh, my Jesus Christ." I went into my Nasturtium room, climbed on a chair, got my manuscript from the shelf, emptied the closet of my clothes, put them on the back of the first man who appeared who was not a fireman—the flames roared—the skylight fell with a smash—they would not let me stay long enough to get my shoes—I threw my dear Japanese robe (never be without one) over my night dress and went downstairs—where distracted men and servants dragged me in my bare feet on to the stone steps and shouted at me to *go*. They clamored so I could not seem to make them comprehend that my innocent little feets were bare and not ready for the street on a cold March evening, even if night-gowns were more popular as promenade costumes than they have appeared to be this winter.

But at last I made myself clear, and a man took me in his arms and carried me across the street to Mrs. Nordhoff's; whereupon it was rumored immediately that Mrs. Burnett had with much forethought and presence of mind promptly become insensible, and had to be borne, swooning, from the flames.

And here, my Kitty, let me inform you that virtue was at last rewarded. I was attired for the occasion in a beautiful, crisp, clean little night gown, with frills of lace standing right straight out nobly in every direction. I had on the blue satin ribbon and I was *Rescued*—in the most approved manner—though there was not the slightest necessity for it—but it had as wildly romantic an air as if I had been Clarissa Harlowe.

Indeed, there are ill disposed and envenomed persons—Virginia and Euphemia Macfarlane, for instance, who intimated—being filled with spite and envy—that I polished and Rosalined all my little nails and heels—put on my most decorative night gown—applied a match to the garret myself and then retired to my bed room with a sweet, unconscious smile, and waited for developments.

But you and your Mamma, my Kitty, who know the interstices of my unsophisticated mind, will know perfectly well that I could never have been guilty of such moral obliquity—I should never have done it during such a dull season—I should have preferred to have arranged it at *your* house—with the Vendome just round the corner—and a W. B. [Wilson Barrett, friend of the Halls, who was touring the country in classic drama] engagement being played at the Globe—and I would have had it between performances too. . . . Dr. Burnett received the first discharge from the hose on his head. The colored servants became at once raving maniacs, and somebody stole my only ten dollars and the Marquis of Lorne, [one of the china pugs] on account of his gold harness. . . .

The Nordhoffs were the family of Charles Nordhoff, the California journalist.

A good part of the fall of 1886 was spent at the home of the Halls, struggling to regain her health and her ability

to work. The atmosphere of the Hall home being, as it were, international, with talk of Europe, and many comings and goings to foreign lands, she was steadily becoming imbued with a desire again to go abroad. Of course, her idea was that she should take the boys with her. Doro, with some heaviness of heart, came to agree with her about this, and so the plans came to fruition when Dearest and the boys, with Kitty Hall as guide, philosopher, and friend, sailed in May, 1887, on the S. S. *Ems*, of the North German Lloyd Line, to get off at Southampton and stay in England for the summer. In a short time the family was located in typical London lodgings at 23 Weymouth Street.

It was probably about this time that the name "Fluffy" began to come into general use among her intimate friends. While, as a pet name, it was a betrayal of her real character, as applied to her, considered only externally and superficially, it seemed to be appropriate. Always concerned with dress, during this particular period she became addicted to frills and furbelows of lace. She also had a "bang," which she kept "fluffed up," at the cost of considerable attention. Half an invalid most of the time, she wore lacy "tea gowns" as much for comfort as for appearance. George Simmons, a Boston friend, is supposed to have originated the name, and it was quickly appropriated by Kitty, Charlie Rice, Will Dennis, and all the intimate Washingtonians as quite a fitting pet name for the woman of whom they were all so fond. It had many variations, such as Fluffina, Fluffiana, and, when Effie became affectionately emphatic, it emerged as Fluffianoronimous.

London soon came to pay its respects to the young American authoress. Daisy Hall was singing a successful season in oratorio and drawing-room concerts in London at the time. Close friends of the Halls, the Lankesters, a rather large family headed by a Dowager Mother who, as a fine

type of British matron, ruled her family firmly, lived right around the corner. Doctor [now Sir] Ray Lankester, the eldest, being then a professor at Oxford, was not frequently seen in the London house. Doctor Owen Lankester, a practising physician and surgeon, soon became an intimate of the Burnett household. He was a splendid, big man with a boyish pink-and-white round face. His ever-present good humor rippled all over his countenance and kept his huge frame continually shaking with chuckles.

Mrs. Burnett held "Tuesday afternoons" in her little 23 Weymouth Street drawing-room, which, in a characteristic manner, she began to beautify with her own things. The windows were kept filled with blooming flowers "all a'blowin' and a'growin'" as the hucksters bawled daily in the streets, and artfully toned scarfs and bits of pottery or enamel were bought from "Liberty's" to make bright spots in the commonplace room.

Her association with Henry James began during her earliest days in London. Her friendship with Israel Zangwill began, too, at this time. He was one of a party that went to Mme. Tussaud's Wax Works Museum, and he "rescued her" from her own fright in the Chamber of Horrors. His gentle understanding of her case of "nerves" made a great impression upon her.

The Jubilee pageant was, of course, the most important event of this visit to England. The presence in London of all the continental royalties and especially the Indian potentates, with their gorgeously apparelled suites, gave the imagination a tremendous stimulus. The procession itself thrilled her, perhaps, more greatly than it did the boys. It was seen under the most favorable circumstances—from well-placed seats just opposite one of the minor palaces, in front of which played the mounted band of the famous Royal Horse Guards. Certainly, all that was English in

PENCIL SKETCH OF MRS. BURNETT
made during her stay at Elm Farms, in Suffolk, in August, 1887.

her rose up as the members of the Royal Family passed—and finally the dear old Queen, bowing so benignly from her state carriage with its cream-colored horses, outriders, and footmen.

After the Jubilee celebration London was quickly deserted. Mrs. Burnett found a little farmhouse in picturesque Wangford, neat Southwold, where she, the boys, and Kitty could be taken in as guests. Elm Farm was the name of the place, and it was a real working farm, with barn and cattle and cows, and fields of grain ready to be harvested.

The English countryside represented to her unfulfilled childish longings. In this congenial atmosphere she quickly became herself again,. She enjoyed watching the boys take part in the farm life, pitching hay, mowing the wheat, harvesting, and going along with the farmer when he went to hunt the rabbits that were seriously damaging his crops. This English outdoor life was part of her plan of education for them.

The next step was travel on the Continent. Kitty Hall had spent much of her childhood in Florence. It was therefore the logical thing that they should plan to spend the winter there. The journey was made in late October, broken with a three or four days' stop in Paris. In Florence Kitty Hall's old friends, the McNamees, were still running their pension in the Villa Trollope on the Piazza Indipendenza—once owned by the novelist Anthony Trollope.

The American authoress and her family were soon comfortably located in a small suite on the third floor, with windows and a balcony looking out upon the snowy peaks of the Apennines and the opalescent sunsets over the Mugnione Valley—the big room reputed to be the very one in which Trollope worked.

Mrs. Burnett had embarked on this trip, expecting it would provide the new scenes and new people needed by her

creative powers. Having lived in what seemed to her a restricted American atmosphere for so many years, she felt that if she were to make any steps forward along her natural path, it must be by widening her horizon and seeing more of the Old World civilization and peoples. This she did in good measure during her stay in Florence. The salons and ballroom of Pension McNamee were the centre of the social life of the English and American colonies in Florence, but all occasions were given local color by the attendance of many Italians and French, particularly officers of Italian regiments, such as the Bersaglieri, quartered at Florence.

It was, indeed, "Continental," and far removed from the "Main Street" of New Market that had been her sole inspiration for her first little novels, or even the dingy streets of Manchester—or, for that matter, Washington, New York, or Boston. It was the native land of the imagination, a land of beauty, art, culture, with romance lurking 'round every corner.

Some weeks after her arrival, she wrote to her "great" friend, Doctor Owen Lankester, in London:

1 Via del Podere,
Piazza dell Independenza.

My dear Mr. Lankester:
Dr. Lankester:
Owen Lankester, M. D.:

I do not know which of these is quite right, so I write them all as a matter of conscience and you shall choose for yourself. You will perceive that I am in Florence, but you doubtless are not aware that I am living in four villas all at once—that I walk up and down white marble stairs, surrounded by colonnades with arches and white pillars—that I occupy a suite of huge rooms just vacated by an English Countess—that I have a piazza of my own, big enough for a ball room, and that I lean over massive balustrades of

FLORENTINE SALON SCENE

From book of silhouettes made for and presented to Mrs. Burnett by First Lieutenant of Bersaglieri, Gustaldi.

stone to look into a garden full of orange and lemon and magnolia and cypress trees, and oleanders, and roses, and oleafragrante, and fountains, and ancient medallions, and Russian boar hounds, and servitors who may "Buono giorno, Signora," and who are called Lisa and Pasquale and Carlo and Vittorio and Luigi and Assunta, as if they were part of an opera.

And I have on my table a glass full of wild crocuses, gathered in the Cascine, and a brown rosary bought from a brown old woman in the Piazza Santissima Annunciata—a rosary about two yards long and with carved beads as big as potatoes, and it is worth "quattro lire" and was evidently made and blessed for you because it is just your size—for of course you know you never could commit a little sin—you are too, too big, and consequently a little rosary would prove inadequate to any of your occasions. . . .

I tell you all these interesting and romantic things with a view to awakening in you a spirit of bitter and rancorous envy. . . . You only live at No. 5 Upper Wimpole Street and have your breakfast served by mere Maria, Jane, or Susan, and you spend your morning in your office instead of the Uffizi, surrounded by Di Medicis and Madonnas and Venuses and San Lorenzos on gridirons and Maddelenas pensively regarding skulls.

Have you never been here? You must come. It is very interesting, and it is "molto—molto bello." That is all the Italian I know and I am so pleased with it my sole object in writing this letter was that I might find a place to bring it in. You, for instance, are "molto, molto bello," but you must not let it make you proud—that is to say, not any prouder than you are.

Do these little jeers make you feel as if you had come in to take tea at 23 Weymouth Street? I hope so. Such is their amiable intention. . . .

FROM LIEUTENANT GUSTALDI'S SILHOUETTE BOOK

Retiring in good order along the Lung' Arno Nuovo from a ball at the Pension McNamee.

Kitty is going to desert me, to my grief and desolation. Her friend, Madame Garzes, takes her to Rome on Wednesday, and after a month there they go to Naples. Madame Garzes was one of her most intimate school friends. . . .

I can only endeavor to console myself by writing a new book and taking unlimited French and Italian lessons. When I return I shall be able to say to you in the most fluent manner, "Have you seen the pink umbrella of the baker, or the blue boots of the respectable aunt of the Russian General?" Then you will be so overjoyed that you will dissolve into floods of tears.

Yesterday we went to the Duomo and to Santissima Annunciata. How beautiful—how beautiful that Duomo! I must send you a picture of the new façade. The Piazza Santissima Annunciata is the one in which stands the statue of the Duke Fernando Browning has written of in "The Statue and the Bust." There he sits on a great bronze horse, looking forever at the upper corner window of the Palace, and he is evidently quite capable of many things. I think, my friend, of that bronze face, always, always upturned through all the sunny days and moonlit nights to that window from which the beautiful answering eyes vanished hundreds of years ago. This is romance—this is Italy! They *never* did things like that in Wimpole Street.

The renewed assurance of my most distinguished consideration to you, my love to your "Mamma"—and, I am

Yours Most Respectfully,

Frances H. Burnett.

The boys had been placed in a French-Italian school, run by a M. DeManger, where it was hoped that they would—among other things— learn to speak French. This permanent link with Florence having been established, the mother decided that a real home would be better than a pension,

and a spacious apartment was found on the Lung' Arno Nuovo, near the Cacini (the great public park) in what was jocularly known as the Casa di Tutti, because so many people of such diverse nationalities lived there. The apartment was on the second floor and extended across the front, commanding a view of the Arno, its valley and its bridges, and the villa-clad heights on the farther side.

Another member was added to the ménage, as a companion to Mrs. Burnett, particularly to help her with her French. It was Mlle. Luisa Chiellini, a brilliant and handsome young woman, who had been recommended by the McNamees. In a very short time her personal charm and her executive ability made her a member of the family indeed, and an almost indispensable one.

Among the Americans staying in Florence at the time were David Bispham and his vivacious wife. He was studying with Vannucini, and was thought to have a most brilliant future. He came to pay his respects to Mrs. Burnett, and the friendship then begun lasted until his death. Daisy Hall returned to the scene of her childhood to give a concert, with Bispham as baritone. She brought the English woman composer, Mary Carmichael, with her. Maude Valerie White, another English song-writer, was also in Florence that winter. All came once, or more, to sing and visit in the Burnett apartment.

Social Florence extended every kindness to Mrs. Burnett, and she saw much of a group of interesting people. She was frequently entertained at the Villa Ball, in the Viale dei Colli, home of the sculptor, Thomas Ball, and there developed with the Ball family something more than a casual friendship. Another sculptor, Hiram Powers, was represented by daughters, the Misses Ibbetson, also in the Viale dei Colli, with whom Mrs. Burnett spent much time. Among the literary workers of the group were Violet Paget,

whose pseudonym was Vernon Lee, and Miss Constance Fenimore Woolson, the latter having a fine villa at Bellosguardo. Of these two Mrs. Burnett naturally saw a great deal, beginning permanent friendships with them. Mrs. Ross, daughter of Lady Duff Gordon, at whose villa she lunched with Gladstone; Villari, the Italian historian and his English wife; the Eyres, widow and daughter of an American banker, were people important in her circle and of whom she spoke frequently in later years. Regarding Mrs. Ross, she wrote to Kitty:

". . . Did you ever read [Ouida's] Friendship? Of course you have—Mrs. Ross, who was the original Lady Joan Challoner, the final captor of Fiordelisa and Prince Tores, called here yesterday. It seems she is the daughter of Lady Duff-Gordon. She is a rather handsome elderly woman, with an immense amount of energy, and she lives in Della Stufas Villa, and the Marquis is there, too, when he is not in Rome in attendance on the King. I think his villa is called Castignine.—I lunched there the other day with the Gladstones. Mr. Gladstone had asked Mrs. Ross if she knew me and said he wanted to meet me.—So there was a lunch party, and I went down. It was very interesting.

"Mr. Gladstone sat near me at lunch, and was delightful. I find Prime Ministers agree with me. He is a fascinating old man, and said the most lovely things. Fauntleroy has charmed him—he told me he believed the book would have great effect in bringing about added good feeling between the two nations and making them understand each other. He and Mrs. Gladstone and his son and two daughters and the Duchess of Sermoneta went out to the villa—which is seven or eight miles from Florence—in the train, which, finding itself overweighted with the Irish Question and so much Statesmanship, promptly broke down about two miles

away from the house, landing the party in the road—at least, placing them there.

"I am not fond of trains, and had driven out in a victoria with two horses, and so my carriage went to pick them up—all of them it could carry—the rest came in Mrs. Ross' donkey cart. Afterwards I took Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone home and it was a lovely drive. He was very much agitated because he thought they had taken possession of my carriage—and so was Mrs. Gladstone. They were quite insubordinate at first and wanted to sit in the back seat, but I tucked myself into it and coaxed and beguiled them and related suitable anecdotes until they were soothed and resigned, and at the end of the drive he said, 'I will no longer feel remorse, Mrs. Burnett, I will only blush a little,' and, of course, I replied, 'Then you will be very wicked—to blush at having given a pleasure.' Mrs. Gladstone is coming to see me and she asked me to let them know when I arrive in London."

Ouida was a much-talked-of resident of Florence, having a villa on the heights beyond the Arno, in the view commanded by the windows of the apartment. Friends of both made an attempt to bring them together. It appeared, however, that the first appointment was unsatisfactory, because Mrs. Burnett's friend had made the mistake of suggesting the date—a matter that in deference to Ouida's literary prominence, age, and social dignity, should have been left to her. Mrs. Burnett did see Ouida, later, however, and wrote to Madam Edna Hall about it in the following strain: ". . . Kitty has told you about my visit to Ouida. It was not at all exciting. She did nothing whatever to me. . . ."

CHAPTER XVII

THE FAUNTLEROY PLAY

Just as the Italian Spring was beginning to work its wonders on the Valley of the Arno, there came a dramatic interruption of gaieties that Mrs. Burnett was so thoroughly enjoying. A letter to Owen Lankester, in London, tells about it:

50 Lung Arno Nuovo,
Florence, 1887.

BENEVOLENT GIANT:

Do something for me—I am a distracted little person.—A thief has quietly dramatized Fauntleroy and I am engaged in fierce battle with him. A large young woman—possibly your size—is to play Cedric. Figuerez vous! Figurativi! (French and Italian *ensemble.* It is *so* difficult to speak English.)

Accidente! Brutta bestia! Some of that is swearing. I am very proud of it. Madonna Mia! O, Signore!—What I wish you to do is to be present at the first night of that play—if it has not yet been done—and take with you some other intelligent mind and feeling heart and then telegraph to me, "Good," or "Bad," and then write to me in your most powerful language.

The brigand, whose name is Seebohm, *knew* he was doing a miserable, dishonest thing, and knew I thought myself protected by the "All rights reserved" on the title page. He kept his plan most discreetly secret until he was ready and it was too late for me to hurry *my* play and secure myself—and then he calmly informed me that he had "dramatized my charming book." Then, letters and telegrams and general excitement. Then I think he realized that he was in a rather glaringly ugly position and that public opinion would be against him, and after having told me I couldn't

help myself, etc., etc., he finally telegraphed that he would give me half profits if I would sanction.

But I will not sanction for any profits if my dear little boy is spoiled. Will you go and see? Take your dear "Mamma"— Yes, your dear *Mamma*—in the midst of my agitation I pause to defy you. Oh! yes, and if you can allure the gentleman whom I loved in secret last summer—but whose cherished name I have unfortunately forgotten—the one with the nice eyes and the lovely demeanor—the one who was *molto bellino-er* than you—you will be able to pick him out by that, because there could not possibly be more than one. His opinion, combined with *yours*—would decide anything for me.

. . . I want to write a beautiful long letter to you and tell you about the carnival, and how, *of* course, I had the most beautiful carriage in the Flower Corso—a mass of flowers—with three hundred bouquets—and the most stalwart cavalier who could throw bouquets *anywhere*—and how I went to the Veglione and wore a pearl and pink satin domino and a black mask and enjoyed myself,—Oh, but I enjoyed myself!—and made two men the most beautiful little reproachful scenes and frightened them nearly to death, because they had guilty consciences and knew *some* one had the right to reproach them and they believed the pearl domino was the person,—just as you would if she had clutched you by the arm and whispered in an impassioned voice, "How *can* you treat me so *cruelly*," etc., etc.

But you shall have a *letter* later. Now I must dress and go and call on a Duchess, to whom I have owed a call for two weeks. She probably won't let me in when I arrive, though she is a very nice duchess. You know the one I told you about, who may call the King "Cousin."

I want to be a duchess myself. I think it would be nice.

Addio, Illustrissimo Signor.

Mr. Seebohm hurried to Florence to try to make his peace. Mrs. Burnett was thoroughly aroused and quickly gave him to understand that she considered his action rank piracy—that she would not submit to it—and would go to London at once to protect what she knew were her rights, whether the law recognized them or not. Mr. Seebohm returned to England to rush the production of the play, without having his generous offer of a share in the royalties accepted.

On a train not many hours behind followed an irate authoress with her companion, Miss Chiellini, and a generous supply of manuscript paper, pencils, and ink. The Frances Hodgson Burnett dramatization of Fauntleroy was started then and there, and a good proportion of it was done when she and Luisita Chiellini arrived in London. Through the kind offices of the Lankester family, she immediately got in touch with Kaye & Guedalla, a well-known London firm of solicitors, and put her case in their hands.

Mr. Seebohm's statement that he was within his legal rights seemed to express the law at the time. The writer of a story had no defined ownership in its dramatic values. English authors had suffered greatly from this state of affairs, but had been able to do nothing. Mrs. Burnett resolved to try, at least. Her case was quickly made up and forcefully presented to the courts.

Seebohm's play was produced at the Prince of Wales Theatre on the afternoon of February 23, 1888.

Earl of Dorincourt	C. W. Somerset
Cedric Errol	Miss Annie Hughes
John Havisham	Mr. Royce Carleton
Silas Hobbs	Mr. Arthur Williams
Reverend Jacob Mordaunt	Mr. W. Cheesman
Dawson	Mr. Stephen Gaffrey
Simpkin	Mr. Windham Guise
Mrs. Errol	Miss Mary Rorke
Mary O'Brien	Miss Cicely Richards

MRS. BURNETT

In London when she was putting on the Fauntleroy play. Seated is her companion, Lisa Chiellini, who joined the family during their stay in Florence.

It made a fairly good impression, as is indicated by this fragment of a newspaper review:

"The pronounced success achieved by this most charming piece on its first performance has been confirmed at subsequent matinees. It is to be regretted that we were not permitted to see Mrs. F. H. Burnett's dramatization of her own beautiful work rather than Mr. Seebohm's, though it must be admitted he has made his most attractive. But, then, for how much of his success he is indebted to the original; for certainly, where he has departed from it, he has not embellished or improved, but rather the contrary."*

In later years Mrs. Burnett developed lasting friendships with members of this "pirate" cast, particularly Miss Annie Hughes. In the meantime she was completing her own play. She wrote to Kitty in April:

DARLING MINE KITTEN:

I can only scribble a few words because just now I am so hurried. The play will be finished in a few days and I think it will be very pretty. The thing now is to find a Fauntleroy. The mother of one is coming to see me tomorrow afternoon. The child is said to be very pretty and clever, and entirely at ease on the stage. I am arranging to have it produced at the Strand Theatre, though perhaps it is best not to mention it at present.

Mr. Barrett is doing everything for me and reads the play as I write it. You should see him patronize me, and, figuratively speaking, pat me on my little *boucles*. Yesterday he brought me a mechanical tin cart *to play with.*

FLUFFY.

Mr. Barrett was Wilson Barrett, the actor whom Mrs. Burnett had met through the Halls. He toured America

*(From the Houdini Collection of Dramatic Records).

several times, first with a classic repertory including Claudian, Clito, Ingomar, and Hamlet, and later with such modern plays as "The Silver King," "The Sign of the Cross," and "The Deemster," in which he had achieved a great success in England.

The play was put in rehearsal under the direction of the famous Mrs. Madge Kendal; a fine cast was selected, including the sweet, slim, Vera Beringer for the part of Cedric. Terry's Theatre was engaged for a series of trial matinées. The "law's delay" for once was not in evidence, and just about the time the rehearsals were over and the "Real Little Lord Fauntleroy" ready for presentation, the courts handed down a decision granting an injunction against the Seebohm production. While based primarily upon the fact that actual copies from the copyright book had been used by Seebohm and his cast, the decision, with further decisions later handed down in the same cause, was broad enough to settle forever the question of an author's ownership of the dramatic rights in a story.

The "Real Little Lord Fauntleroy" was produced on Monday afternoon, May 14, 1888, at Terry's Theatre, London. Seebohm's version was withdrawn on the previous Saturday. Mrs. Burnett's cast was remarkable for the number of its members who later achieved real positions on the English stage. It was as follows:

Earl of Dorincourt	Mr. Alfred Bishop
Mr. Havisham	Mr. Brandon Thomas
Silas Hobbs	Mr. Albert Chevalier
Wilkins	Mr. Hendric
Higgins	Mr. Branscombe
Thomas	Mr. Maurice Vaughn
Cedric Errol	Miss Vera Beringer
Dick Tipton	Miss Esme Beringer
Mrs. Errol	Miss Winifred Emery
Minna	Miss Helen Leigh
Mary	Miss Fanny Brough

Vera Beringer, who is still in dramatic life in England, retains vivid recollections of those days. She writes:

"I played the part over here between six and seven hundred times—and with what a wonderful cast! . . . I remember that there were two things which worried Mrs. Burnett before production—the shape of Alfred Bishop's nose, which was not Roman, and my hair, which was red. Lord Fauntleroy is depicted as having long golden curls, whereas I possessed a thick, straight, auburn mane. However, with the help of a false bridge to his nose, concocted of grease paint in Alfred Bishop's case, and curling rags in mine, we both managed to approximate nearly enough to the authoress's original conception of her characters.

"The result was not achieved without tears on my part, for I strongly disliked going to bed with a rampart of hard little knobs sticking into my head. However, one had to suffer to be—Cedric—and the curling ends of my hair certainly justified the rather drastic means.

"Little Lord Fauntleroy was a real person to me. I loved him dearly, and it was a daily joy to go down to the theatre for each performance and 'be Cedric', as I used to say.

"It was an amazing time for any child—a time of success, of spoiling, of triumph; but somehow it was more connected in my childish mind with Fauntleroy than with myself. I remember so vividly the first performance of all, at Terry's Theatre, when Mrs. Burnett sat in a stage box, and in her enthusiasm flung me her immense bouquet of pink roses. Such an exciting thing had of course never happened to me before, and I remember saying 'thank you' in a burst of gratitude, whereupon she replied, 'Bless the child, and she did not forget a single word!'

"Although, naturally, I did not realize it at the time, that great artist, Mrs. Kendal, who produced the play, was, I feel sure, largely responsible for my success.

"On one occasion when Queen Alexandra and the late King Edward came to see the piece, at their request I was taken up to their box by Mrs. Burnett, and I remember feeling terribly exercised in my mind as to whether I should 'bob' or bow to royalty. As a little girl the former was more natural to me, but my black velvet knickerbockers seemed to point to the greater suitability of the more masculine bow.

"However, my anxiety was relieved and my fears put at rest when the King and Queen both kissed me, and so solved the difficulty for me.

"Mrs. Burnett occupied a rather odd position in my small mind. I looked on her as a kind of relation of Lord Fauntleroy's, and consequently I had for her the same sort of affection I had for Cedric himself."

From Miss Beringer's scrap-book comes a review of the play by William Archer, in the London *World* of May 23, 1888, which indicates the success the little play immediately achieved:

"Little Lord Fauntleroy is a no less doughty hero than Tom Thumb the Great. He is a paladin in knickerbockers, a boy Bayard, an Amadis of America. Not content with taming and humanising his ogre grandsire, he has actually bearded the giant, Jurisprudence, in his den, and wrung from him a tardy concession to reason and fair play. The pirate plot-grabbers have fled confounded before the little champion. Novelists need no longer fear to see their brain-children kidnapped, distorted, and sent forth to pick up pence for the kidnapper in the theatrical highways and by-ways. This great reform they owe to Little Lord Fauntleroy, 'a hero in a happy hour conceived.' The new Fauntleroy at Terry's Theatre is altogether superior to the pseudo-Fauntleroy at The Prince of Wales's. Mrs. Burnett's adaptation of her delightful story is better than Mr. Seebohm's,

VERA BERINGER AND WINIFRED EMORY

Leaders in the cast of the first "Little Lord Fauntleroy" production at Terry's Theatre, London, May 14, 1888.

though the needless infusion of melodrama, in the person of the adventuress, is unfortunately retained. It is quite out of harmony with the general tone of the poem—for in Little Lord Fauntleroy Mrs. Burnett shows herself a true poet though her Pegasus may be a rocking-horse. Even Miss Helen Leigh's clever acting merely serves to heighten the discordant effect of this episode, which should have been kept in the background if it could not be altogether eliminated. This, however, matters little. The true ''vantage,' as Cedric says, of this production lies in Miss Vera Beringer's playing of the title-part. Clever as she is, Miss Annie Hughes could not, by taking thought, subtract a cubit from her stature. There was an inevitable suggestion of Cherubino in her performance. Now Miss Beringer has all the cleverness of Miss Hughes, with only half her inches, and that makes a mighty difference. There have doubtless been Infant Phenomena more remarkable than Miss Beringer—young Rosciuses who spouted Shakespeare, and strutted their hour upon the stage as tragedians in miniature. These childish virtuosos could at best mimic the conventional tricks of their instructors, whereas Miss Beringer —though trained, and admirably trained, by Mrs. Kendal —really gives us a piece of pure nature, or, at least, of the art which conceals art. I could find it in my heart to call her performance adorable, if that word had not been hopelessly vulgarized by Mr. Swinburne in his Hugoesque hysterics of baby-worship. The other parts are all excellently filled. I can scarcely remember a more delicate piece of character-acting than Mr. Alfred Bishop's Earl of Dorincourt. Its touches are at once minute and vigorous. Miss Winifred Emery as Mrs. Errol plays her chief scene, in the first act, with real tenderness and feeling; and Mr. Brandon Thomas, Mr. Chevalier, Miss Esme Beringer, and Miss Fanny Brough are as good as need be. The little entertain-

ment is altogether delightful, and Terry's Theatre, where Little Lord Fauntleroy receives in the afternoon and Sweet Lavender in the evening, is decidedly 'the place to spend a happy day.'"

The play was kept on for matinées, and soon created a record by going beyond its fiftieth "morning" performance, as the English expression goes. After its London success, it went for the tours through the Provinces usual with London successes, and continued in production in England for nearly two years, having Lucy Webling and others to head the cast.

Meanwhile, the boys, with Kitty Hall, rejoined their Dearest in London while the success of the play was at its height. Mrs. Burnett had taken a house in one of the characteristic London Terraces, at Regent Park West, and most of her days were spent in hard work connected with the Fauntleroy play, and the finishing up of her book, "The Pretty Sister of Jose," which she had started in Florence.

The suit she had brought to protect her dramatic rights in the Fauntleroy book, proved highly important to writers the world over. The Society of British Authors felt that some expression of appreciation was due Mrs. Burnett for her courage in taking up a fight which commonly had been considered hopeless. It was decided to present her with a testimonial from English literary workers. A banquet was given at Queen's Hall, July 14, 1888, by the Society, with Mrs. Burnett and James Russell Lowell as guests of honor,—Mrs. Burnett, because of her Fauntleroy fight, and Lowell because of his work for copyright in America. Pretty speeches were made by Mr. Douglas Sladen, Jerome K. Jerome, and others, and in the name of her hosts the author of "Little Lord Fauntleroy" was presented with a magnificent diamond bracelet, inscribed "To Frances Hodgson Burnett, with the gratitude of British Authors,"—

VERA BERINGER AND ALFRED BISHOP

as Fauntleroy and the Earl of Dorincourt, in the London production of "Little Lord Fauntleroy."

a diamond ring to match, and a set of resolutions on parchment, beautifully illuminated and inscribed with the names of those who had helped make the gift.

This occasion, while of course a great source of satisfaction in one way, was far from a delight to Mrs. Burnett. Few, even of her most intimate friends, ever realized how extremely shy and retiring she was by nature. Even later, when she was more grown up in her success, so to speak, a similar banquet gave her sleepless nights for nearly three weeks in advance. In this instance, the distress was reduced to a minimum by the promise that only the simplest words of thanks would be required of her, and nothing in the way of a set speech. She was only to "beam her little beam."

This festivity was probably the final one in her London season of 1888, and she arranged for a brief holiday in the English country. This time she took a small farmhouse at St. Peter's, Thanet, Joss Farm, running down through gently sloping fields of yellow grain dotted with red poppies to white chalk cliffs, and the blue sea of the English Channel. Surrounding the rambling cottage was such a tousled garden of perennial flowers as only an English climate, aided by the expert neglect of an English farmer's wife, can produce. There was a thick patch of lavender at the bottom of it, to give just the right romantic fragrance to the cleanliness of the farm cottage. Phloxes and beebalm, and other mustily odorous things—not to forget box—made the garden a thing of joy for the lady renter. It was a quiet spot that Mrs. Burnett revelled in, and, after what had been a really strenuous period of work, she gave herself up to holidaying, and to her first real making of friends with flowers.

Some time later she wrote this paragraph in memory of Joss Farm:

". . . Do you recall the little farm house on the Kentish

Coast whose queer, low-roofed dining room I furnished principally with poppies and ivy and Turkey red cotton chair covers and white muslin curtains—and whose work-box of a sitting room was made resplendent with blue and white cretonne bought in the village at sixpence a yard? I could, of course, never have produced my perfect effects but for the millions of poppies which were in the field, sloping down to the cliffs, and the ivy which grew over the walls. When I stood every morning in the midst of that field with my arm full of poppies and looked at the sea of amazing scarlet blossoms on every side of me—and listened to the skylarks reeling about in the blueness overhead—I used to reel and sway a little myself. A world so full of dazzlingness made one unsteady on one's feet."

She could not, however, holiday long in this quaint and cosey spot. The news of the success of the Fauntleroy play had travelled quickly to the United States. R. M. Field, of the Boston Museum, was the American manager most actively interested, and arrangements were finally completed for producing Fauntleroy, with his stock company, at a series of matinées.

There was available for the cast a sweet little girl by the name of Elsie Leslie, who had already shown exceptional talent. She had played in Augustus Thomas's version of Mrs. Burnett's other child's story, "Editha's Burglar," and had made a great success. In this play, Mrs. Burnett's old collaborator, William Gillette, was the Burglar. Hearing of Elsie through Mr. Gillette, Mrs. Burnett was specially anxious that she should have the part and, fortunately, Mr. Field was able to obtain her.

It was desired to have the opening in Boston as early in the autumn as possible so that the play might have a good season in Boston and then go to New York, if the fates were with it, for the remainder of the winter.

ELSIE LESLIE

who created the part of Fauntleroy in America. The portrait is by William M. Chase, and is now owned by Mrs. Elsie Leslie Milliken, and reproduced by permission.

When Mrs. Burnett reached America in early autumn, the Boston Museum Stock Company had already begun its run of the play, September 10, 1888. As always, she was vitally interested in the actual details of the production, and went immediately to Boston to put some finishing touches on the work of the actors. Little Elsie Leslie she was, of course, very anxious to see. This letter preceded their meeting:

206 Dartmouth Street,
Wednesday.

MY DEAR LITTLE GIRL:

I found your pretty letter waiting for me when I arrived yesterday morning, and as soon as I had read it, I felt quite sure we should be friends. Everyone tells me what a dear little Fauntleroy you make, and I am looking forward with great pleasure to seeing you play tomorrow night. When you see in one of the boxes a *little* lady in a yellow brocade dress, who smiles at you and looks delighted, you will know who it is. Then after the play I shall try to see you for a few minutes, because, of course, I shall want to kiss you and tell you how pleased I am. I have no little girl of my own but I have two boys, and one of them used to be just like Fauntleroy, and they both have always called me "Dearest." That was why I made Fauntleroy call his mother so. I know what a sweet little name it is. Mr. Gillette told me in New York how beautifully you play. I am sure he loves you.

Your affectionate friend,
FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT.

The cast of the Boston Museum production was:

Earl of Dorincourt	Mr. Henry M. Pitt
Mr. Havisham, a solicitor	Mr. C. Leslie Allen
Silas Hobbs, a grocer	Mr. Geo. W. Wilson
Wilkins, a groom	Mr. James Nolan

Higgins, a farmer	Mr. Thos. E. Coleman
Thomas, a footman	Mr. H. D. Whittemore
Cedric Errol, Lord Fauntleroy	Elsie Leslie
Dick Tipton, a shoeblack	Miss Miram O'Leary
Mrs. Errol	Miss Viola Allen
Minna	Miss Annie M. Clark
Mary	Miss Kate Ryan
Jane	Miss Grace Atwell

This cast contained, as will be seen, several actors who later achieved real success. Performances were given the usual evening hours and matinées, it having been found that the play was not so juvenile as to need being restricted to matinées only.

The reception given the play was all that the author or the managers could have wished, and from the first it was marked for as long a run as could be granted at the Museum. Hardly greater proof of its effect upon the audiences could be given than was contained in a beautiful letter written to Mrs. Burnett by Oliver Wendell Holmes.

296 Beacon Street,
October 28, 1888.

My dear Mrs. Burnett:

It was a wonderful piece of good fortune which brought my daughter and myself into your company on the stair of the Museum, just as we were about making a desperate effort for a ticket. My daughter, Mrs. Turner Sargent, invited two of her friends to join us, and we had a most delightfully memorable evening, though we were all crying like babies half the time.

The tears that will not flow for real grief will sometimes come unbidden at the call of the writer of fiction who knows the human heart, and has access to its hidden fountains.

The lovely portraiture of a sweet child-nature in "Little Lord Fauntleroy" is irresistible. It is a long time since I have been to the theatre—hardly, I think, since Salvini

was here in Boston. I have had much to sadden me, and overshadow my daily life of late years, and this rush of natural emotions with all its tears and heart beats, was like an angel's visit.

You should be very happy, for what mother ever had such a darling child as your dear little Lord Fauntleroy? And to think that he was not born to die, or to grow out of his beauty and infinite charm, like the poor little creatures of flesh and blood all round us!

We thank you and Dr. Burnett with all our hearts for the happiness you have given us and our friends.

With great respect and admiration, I am

Faithfully yours,

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

Sanger & French, who were the lesees of the Broadway Theatre at 41st Street and Broadway, New York, were eager to get hold of this play that was making such a success at the Boston Museum. There was no longer any doubt about the type of audiences Fauntleroy would draw. Old and young alike went to it in droves to laugh and sigh and weep. Arrangements were concluded to bring the attraction to New York in December—early enough for the holidays. Mrs. Burnett, evidently on the way back home from Boston, wrote to Kitty:

Grand Hotel,
31st Street, New York.
November, 1888.

DARLING KITTY:

. . . I have just seen Mr. French. It appears that I am to have all I want—do all I want—rule the earth—in this matter—everything is to be subservient to my royal will. "This," I say, "appears,"—"*Just* as you please, Mrs. Burnett—*all* that you wish." And your Fluffy listens and

smiles and watches and speculates—and believes nothing and nobody.

Tonight I go to the Broadway Theatre to see it. Mr. French swears the stage is only thirty inches larger than that of the Museum. He tells me the setting is to be superb. Every actor is to be chosen subject to my approval, and is to do exactly as I wish. Let us hope it will turn out so.

Mr. Gillette thinks the Broadway too big and has been trying to arrange for the Madison Square, but I do not think it can be done.

Much, much love.

Your,

FLUFFY.

In a letter to Owen Lankester she said:

1734 K Street,
Washington, D. C.

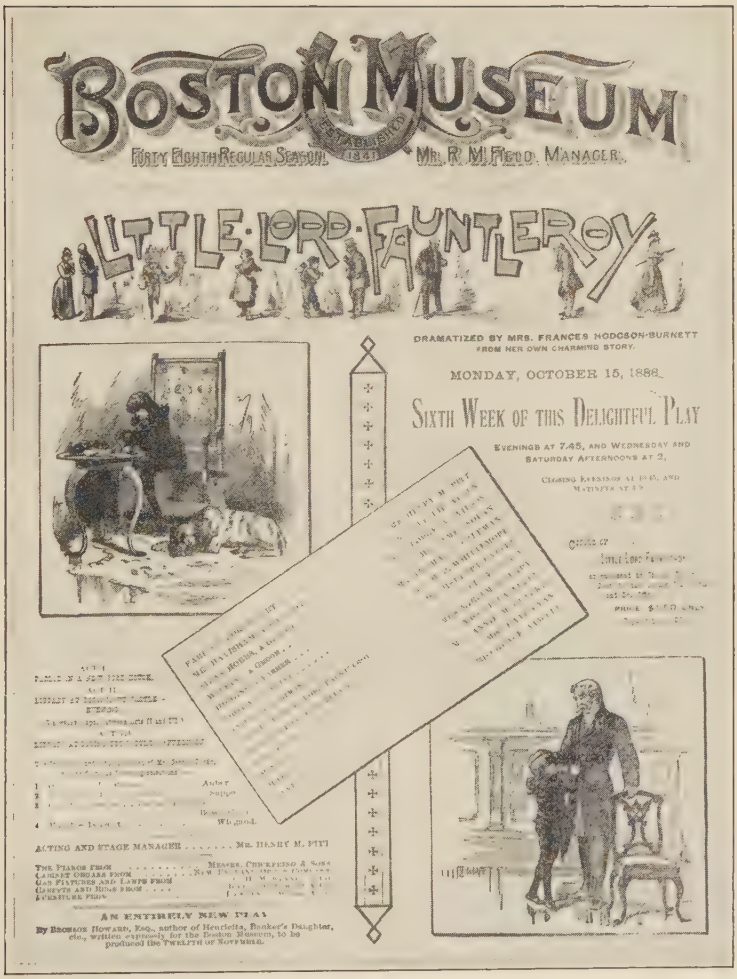
MY DEAR OWEN:

I do not write this letter because you deserve it, but because I hope it will cause you gnawing remorse. It will prove what does not need proving—namely that my disposition is more amiable than yours.

I am sitting in my Den in Washington, but tomorrow I go to New York again to rehearse Fauntleroy for its presentation there. Its success in Boston has been enormous. I have had between seven and eight hundred dollars a week from it and the manager is tearing his hair up by the roots because he had to take it off to put on another piece he had contracted to produce. The child who plays it is charming.

. . . Kitty and Mr. [Wolcott] Balestier and Mr. McClure met us. Mr. McClure has arranged with a certain paper that I shall have fifteen thousand dollars for the *serial right alone* of my next book.

. . . Also—this is confidential—a certain newspaper man has offered me four hundred dollars a month if I will let him come to me one day a week to *talk* over a special department


BOSTON MUSEUM
ESTABLISHED 1841
FORTY EIGHTH REGULAR SEASON.
MR. R. M. FIELD, MANAGER.
LITTLE LORD FAUNTLEROY
DRAMATIZED BY MRS. FRANCES HODGSON-BURNETT
FROM HER OWN CHARMING STORY.
MONDAY, OCTOBER 15, 1888.
SIXTH WEEK OF THIS DELIGHTFUL PLAY
EVENINGS AT 7.45, AND WEDNESDAY AND
SATURDAY AFTERNOONS AT 2.
ACTING AND STAGE MANAGER . . . . . MR. HENRY M. PITT
AN ENTIRELY NEW PLAY

PROGRAMME

of the sixth week of 'Little Lord Fauntleroy" at the Boston Museum, where it ran several months before it came to New York for its long stay. (From the Houdini Collection)

which is to be devoted to children. I am to do nothing but give him my ideas on certain subjects. Would you give a hundred dollars a day merely to talk to me? No, base ingrate, you would not. And yet, where do you find conversation like mine?

Another plan is to give me thousands of dollars to go round the world in a beautiful yacht—to write letters from strange lands for children. But these two last plans are to be kept secret for the present until all is arranged. . . .

FLUFFINA.

This letter to Kitty gives a good idea of the rehearsal days:

Sidney Flats,
52nd St. & Broadway, New York.
November 22, 1888.

MINE KITTY—MINE—MINE!

Fluffy has got out of her little bed early in the morning and is sitting in her little night gown writing you.

. . . We had so much to do in disentangling the Boston play from the London one, and in rearranging the business! But now we have it in order the rehearsals will not take so much time.

. . . We found Elsie had got into the habit of railroading her words so and speaking them indistinctly, with a monotonous rising inflection, so that it would have been impossible to hear her in that large house. I thought it would be best to let her have a rest and be taught quietly to read her lines. She is not to be rehearsed every day—Tommy [Russell] is to rehearse instead.

. . . Elsie and I are great friends. She is a dear little thing. I hope she won't be spoiled. This rivalry must be a sad thing—I mean to try to get a soft, gentle little hold on her mind and move the currents in the right way.

. . . We went out to lunch together the other day and as she was sitting on my knee afterwards she asked if she might call me by some pretty little name instead of saying "Mrs. Burnett," and, after searching her little mind for one for some time, I asked her how she would like to call me what Vivian calls me, and so it was agreed upon, and she wrote on a piece of paper, "My own Dearest. . . ."

Your always very own,

FLUFFY.

Elsie and Mrs. Burnett were staying in the same hotel, and saw much of each other. One way of "getting a gentle hold on her" adopted by Mrs. Burnett was to tell her stories, and one day she told the entire story of "Sara Crewe," which had recently appeared in *St. Nicholas*, but which Elsie had not read.

The play was put on December 11, 1888, and Mrs. Burnett wrote to the boys in Washington about it the next day:

The Sidney Flats,
December, 1888.

MY DARLING BOYS:

I am so tired today that I scarcely know what to do, but I must write you two or three lines to tell you what a grand success Fauntleroy is. I wish you could have been with me to hear the people—all that big theatre *full* of people—shout and shout and call for your small Mamma to come out upon the stage. I went out twice, taking Elsie with me, and each time the curtain had to be raised twice.

A club of two hundred gentlemen came. It is called The Bachelors—and they sent Elsie a magnificent basket of flowers, with a dear little canary in a gilded cage on the top of it. Elsie was delighted. She has called the bird "Bachelor," because he is all alone—and she has printed on a piece of paper "Bachelor Apartment" and hung it on his cage.

. . . The managers here say they never saw such a first night in New York, and each one wants me to write him a play.

. . . Will Vivian send me a nice autograph by the next post?—it is wanted to go with Elsie's.

I sent you a thousand loves and I am always

Your

DEAREST.

The cast was one with even more future dramatic distinction in it than the Boston one—almost as brilliant, in fact, as that of the London production.

Earl of Dorincourt	Mr. J. H. Gilmour
Cedric Errol, Lord Fauntleroy	Miss Elsie Leslie / Master Tommy Russell
Mr. Havisham, a solicitor	Mr. F. F. Mackay
Mr. Hobbs, a grocer	Mr. Geo. Parkhurst
Dick, a bootblack	Mr. Frank E. Lamb
Higgins, a farmer	Mr. John Swinburne
Wilkins, a groom	Mr. Alfred Klein
Thomas, a footman	Mr. John Sutherland
Servant	Mr. T. J. Plunkett
Mrs. Errol	Miss Kathryn Kidder
Minna	Miss Alice Fisher
Mary	Miss Effie Germon
Jane	Miss Carrie Vinton

Tommy Russell alternated in the title part with Elsie Leslie, and later a second clever little boy, Wallace Eddinger, was trained as an understudy and given occasional regular performances. Elsie Leslie was about seven years old, and Tommy Russell a bit older. Tommy was really a stage child, and had been appearing from the time he was three years old. He was a nephew of Mrs. Burnett's old friend, Annie Russell, who had done so well in "Esmeralda." He had played with Edwin Booth, Modjeska, and Sarah Bernhardt, and was really for his age what might be called a "seasoned actor."

Fauntleroy became the play of the season. It reached its one hundredth night with undiminished houses. A gala performance was held to celebrate that occasion, with Elsie Leslie playing the first act, Tommy Russell the second, and the two dividing the last act between them. A beautiful programme was issued, with a full-color lithograph portrait of Mrs. Burnett on the cover, a facsimile of a page of the manuscript of the Fauntleroy book, and full-color lithographs of Elsie and Tommy inside. The play closed only when its twenty-third week carried it into the hot season.

By this time the English company, with Vera Beringer, was playing a return engagement in London at the Opera Comique Theatre, and chubby little Lucy Webling was taking the play a second time through the provinces, giving it to the smaller towns. The New York cast went to Chicago and played six weeks at McViker's Theatre, and Elsie Leslie continued with an extensive tour that took her to the Pacific Coast.

The artistic success was, of course, grateful to the writer, but to Frances Hodgson Burnett, the literary day-laborer, the financial success was more than welcome. She had for so many years, ill or well, written steadily, as much as her strength would permit, that the feeling of the wolf having been definitely turned from the door gave a sense of relief almost priceless. The Fauntleroy play gave such a boost to her prestige in the dramatic world that almost anything seemed possible. She did, in truth, seem under a magic spell. To Kitty she wrote:

1770 Massachusetts Avenue,
January 29, 1889.

MINE KITTY:

. . . Don't tell anyone, but this minute the scenes are being built for the new play I am doing for the Lyceum—such lovely scenes—I am to have everything I like—and I

BROADWAY THEATRE

Corner Broadway, Forty-first Street and Seventh Avenue.

Manager. - - - - - - - - *Mr Frank W. Sanger*

Practically Fireproof.
Thoroughly Comfortable.
Perfectly Ventilated.
Best Constructed and
SAFEST THEATRE IN THE WORLD.

FOR WEEK ENDING MARCH 9th, 1889.

EVERY EVENING AT 8. WEDNESDAY AND SATURDAY MATINEE AT 2.

FIRST PRODUCTION OF

Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett's Dramatic Version of Her Beautiful Story,

Little Lord Fauntleroy.

PRODUCED UNDER THE PERSONAL DIRECTION OF THE AUTHOR.

THE CAST.

EARL OF DORINCOURT.....MR. J. H. GILMOUR
CEDRIC ERROL, (Lord Fauntleroy).....MASTER TOMMY RUSSELL
MR. HAVISHAM, (A Solicitor).....MR. F. F. MACKAY
MR. HOBBS, (A Grocer).....MR. GEO. PARKHURST
DICK, (A Bootblack).....MR. FRANK E. LAMB
HIGGINS, (A Farmer).....MR. JOHN SWINBURNE
WILKINS, (A Groom).....MR. ALFRED KLEIN
THOMAS, (A Footman).....MR. JOHN SUTHERLAND
SERVANT.....MR. T. J. PLUNKETT
MRS. ERROL.....MISS KATHRYN KIDDER
MINNA.....MISS ALICE FISCHER
MARY.....MISS EFFIE GERMON
JANE.....MISS CARRIE VINTON

SCENERY.

ACT I.—Sitting-room in Mrs. Errol's House in New York City.
ACT II.—Library at Dorincourt Castle—Evening.
Six Weeks elapse between Acts II and III.
ACT III.—Library at Dorincourt Castle—Afternoon.

The Orchestra under the direction of MR. ERNEST NEYER will render the following Musical Selections.

OVERTURE "*Tambour der Garde*," - TITTL
SELECTION, - "*Gypsy Baron*." - STRAUSS
SPANISH SONG, "*Carlotta*," MISS G. B[illegible]
POLKA, - *Little Lord Fauntleroy*," - [illegible]

PLAYBILL

of the production of "Little Lord Fauntleroy" at the Broadway Theatre, New York.
(From the Houdini Collection.)

am to finish four acts and have it *presented* in the early part of March. The first and part of the second act are already written—the first goes into rehearsal tomorrow and the second next week.—The whole Lyceum is in commotion.

. . . Such a splendid young woman does all my business for me. Her name is Elisabeth Marbury, and she is simply a wonder of business ability. She has saved me more money and worry during the last weeks than I could easily tell. I am growing so rich—I had eighteen hundred dollars in one week, and every week now it is twelve or fourteen, and there is so much more before me.—Think when I have two plays running at once.

The play mentioned was "Phyllis," but things happened to delay its production.

For a number of years Miss Marbury was retained by Mrs. Burnett exclusively to look after her dramatic and literary affairs. The engagement as Mrs. Burnett's literary agent was the first of its kind that she had held. It was her start, so to speak, in the theatrical field, in which, as the years passed, she went far, enlarging her activities by taking on the business cares of other writers. There was a deep affection as an undercurrent to the business relation, and although in later years Mrs. Burnett largely "managed" her own affairs, she was always in touch with "Bessie" Marbury—and they found many opportunities of renewing their friendship, though usually an ocean or two separated them.

With fortune thus at flood-tide, she was able to put money by, and her characteristic desire for beautiful surroundings expressed itself in the purchase of a house at 1770 Massachusetts Avenue, in Washington. Decorating and furnishing it provided the kind of task she always enjoyed. She wrote to one of her relatives in Manchester, Emma Daniels, about this new house:

1734 K Street,
December 16, 1888.

My dear Emma:

. . . I have just been buying a lovely house for myself. It is a new house and was sold by the man who built it because his business took him to California. It is in the most beautiful Avenue in Washington, and has twenty-two rooms in it. I am making it as like a picture as possible, and I really think it will be lovely, as it is built very gracefully.

It has a large, square hall with a fireplace in it, and a pretty staircase, which is quite an ornamental feature. There are two drawing rooms and one is to be hung with pale blue brocade and the other with yellow. I have been buying furniture and carpets in New York and also brocades and tapestries for portieres. The two large doors that open into the hall from the front drawing room and dining room have portieres of deep blue and gold brocade—the dining room is fitted up in a deep "crushed strawberry" color—walls and plush curtains and inside portieres and carpets, all in the same tone.

My bedroom is to be all delicate flowered stuff, and the paper is *so* pretty—with little pink roses rambling over it, tied with loops of ribbon.

My Den is to be golden yellow and golden brown and crimson—the nasturtium colors. One spare room is to be fitted up with what is called "old rose" India silk—and another daffodil yellow with pale purple wisteria blossoms on it. It is no trifle to match all these things with carpets and papers and all the rest of it, but I am as interested as if it were a doll's house.

. . . I have not yet taken a house in London, but I hope to next season. If I finish a new play, I shall have to come over to attend to it. . . .

Your affectionate,

Frances.

It was shortly after the beginning of 1889 that the occupancy of 1770 Massachusetts Avenue began, and for the remaining months of the winter there were dinner parties, and many festivities in addition to the usual Tuesday afternoons, with Charlie Rice, Will Dennis, and other intimates in steady attendance. The Literary Society was also as active as ever, and of course Mrs. Burnett was glad to entertain it in her new home. So Fluffy, as she was now universally called by all who were in any way intimate, took up the old round of Washington gaieties and found herself more than ever sought out by visitors to Washington.

CHAPTER XVIII

A LONDON SEASON AND AN ACCIDENT

There were business reasons, and many others, including the prostrating heat of Washington, often beginning in June, which made her decide to return to London in early spring for the season of 1889. She therefore arranged for the lease of a London house at 44 Lexham Gardens, Kensington, embarking on one of her typical "fairy stories." Two of the Misses Hadfield, to whose school she had gone as a child, were still in Manchester, and she had visited them occasionally. Being far from prosperous, they were keeping boarders in their house. Thinking that she could help them, Mrs. Burnett conceived the plan of "setting them up" in a good house in London, and becoming their "star" lodger. Hence the Lexham Gardens establishment, the major part of which she furnished herself, drawing again heavily upon the resources of the Liberty Shops.

The trip to London was made in late spring with Vivian only, Lionel electing to stay at home and have an American summer with his cronies. Because of Vivian's interest in it, the Paris Exposition was taken in on the way to London.

She entered into the activities this London season with a joyous spirit, eager to get the most out of what was offered her. But, during all her gaiety, she had a thought for others, as evidenced by this letter from her old home to her large and cheerful doctor friend, Owen Lankester:

108 High Street,
Oxford Street, Manchester.

MY DEAR OWEN:

. . . To be for a moment serious—I found my poor little cousins, of the "unfortunate family," needing my attention

very, very much. When I look at their poor little shabby clothes and their poor little shabby house and see how they live and then reflect that I disdain the second best box at the theatre and that my simplest garment must be running over with lace and tied with satin ribbons, I feel as if I was a criminal. They are such good little things—and you know I am such a bad little thing—and yet, it was I who was given a gift which makes my life a brilliant, successful thing and gives me a thousand friends on every side.

You, for one, you Monstrous Owen, whom I maltreat, though you are so nice to me. The contrast is too strong and I keep saying to myself, "Why did *you* deserve to be the one blessed by the Fairy Godmother? Why should you have everything, and they nothing?"—because I have everything—but one thing. I feel as if I want to devote every moment to them, to change their lives somehow, to sweep away the cobwebs and let in the sunshine and make things more hopeful.

You can't think how poor they are and what a dreary place they live in. I want to find a brighter house for them and I have been walking hours, looking in clean little streets at tiny bay windows, and I have also been buying all sorts of things—none of which you would have lectured and berated me for buying, I am sure.

. . . Hoping that you will be happy, even though you may not be good—or even in spite of your being good, I am always

Your affectionate, FLUFFINA.

Vivian was now with her as companion, going quite often to teas and parties, even being drafted now and again to present a bouquet to a duchess or other patroness upon the occasion of her "opening" some thing or other. Lionel, her little lover, was away from her, and so her joy was not as

complete as it might have been. Of the letters he wrote her at this time, this one is preserved:

July 9, 1889.

Dear Mamma:

I have not received a letter from you for about three weeks, but I suppose you have a great deal to do. Aunt Kate gave me the five dollars you told her to give me and I am ever so much obliged.

I had a very nice time of the Fourth. I had all the fire crackers I wanted and at night I had Roman Candles and Sky Rockets in abundance. Papa gave me one dollar and seventy five cents. DeVin got off early from the office and we fired off fire-crackers for the rest of the afternoon.

. . . Yesterday, Monday, July 8, 1889, was the day of the great prize fight between Sullivan and Kilrain for the championship of the world. Sullivan knocked Kilrain out in seventy two rounds. I suppose you do not care for prize fights, but you can tell Vivian about it.

Tell Vivian if he is not too much employed that I would like to hear from him, because I want to hear about the Paris Exposition and the other things he has been seeing. Tell him also that the Washingtons have won another game. They played it yesterday. The score was 4 to 3, in favor of the Washingtons.

Tell Louisita that I started to write a letter to her but I never finished it. Will you send that ribbon I wrote to you about in a letter a while ago? I have not much to do now. The weather is so hot.

. . . Papa will leave Washington July 15 and he will leave New York July 18. With plenty of love to all.

Your loving son,

Lionel Burnett.

DeVin (Finckel), several years older than Lionel, was his real chum and counsellor, an exceptionally fine young

VIVIAN BURNETT, FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT, LIONEL BURNETT

Taken in 1888, just after the return from the first European trip, about a year and a half before Lionel's death.

fellow just beginning to earn his way. Doctor Burnett was leaving to attend an international medical congress in Berlin, with the intention of returning via England to see his wife and son.

The London season sped along with many receptions and continuous theatre-going. Her play "Phyllis" had been produced July 1, 1889, at the Globe Theatre. It was essentially an adaptation of her early short novel, "The Fortunes of Phillipa Fairfax," the story of a rakish Englishman of middle age who tries to make his peace with his tailor and other creditors by telling them that his pretty daughter is to marry a certain man of title, into whose path she has been thrown by a chance visit to a fashionable country house. The sweet-minded girl, who adores her father, receives a terrible shock when this scheme is disclosed, and what is really a genuine love-affair is nearly ruined.

Phyllis Dysart was played by Alma Murray, Philip Dysart by C. W. Somerset, Wilfred Barrington by H. B. Conway, and Ernest Duval by Laurence Cauley. Clement Scott, in the *London Times*, wrote rather caustically about the little play, condemning it chiefly for lack of construction. Evidently, too, the actors did not know their parts, and ruined the last act. Mr. Scott remarked that it was a pity they did not remember more of their lines, as those they did remember were quite good. Its run was short.

At the close of the season Mrs. Burnett was invited to accept a little bungalow in a beautiful Park Club in Surrey, being developed under the name of Bellagio. The park surrounded several good-size lakes, and was really a carefully cultivated English woodland, with great oak, birch, and beech trees spread over a group of small hills, grassy roads leading everywhere, and a beautiful green carpet of moss and ferns under the trees.

Mrs. Burnett's choice was a bit of a cottage on the side

of a slope looking through the tops of trees over one of the lakes. It had been named "Dorincourt," after the castle in Fauntleroy, and, because of the humor in the contrast implied, Mrs. Burnett let the name stand.

The following letter to Owen Lankester gives some idea of how the days were being occupied:

Dorincourt,
Bellagio, Surrey.

My Unattainable One:

This is Fate, you know! I am not cross but I am disappointed. I think you would have enjoyed being here, and I had made such nice little plans for you. . . .

I am sitting in my pretty corner in the rather tremulous condition attendant upon Mr. Townesend's being out taking his ride on Gordon. Gordon is a lovely new horse I have bought, who is considered extremely dangerous by prejudiced persons at the stables. Mr. Townesend takes him out mildly but firmly every morning and has always returned with his system underanged so far, but I will confess to giving some reflection to his family during the hours which elapse between his gaily caracoling off and his gracefully curvetting back. But, notwithstanding what the grooms say, he does not seem to have trouble with the darling brute when he is driving him, and we have been miles and miles.

Come to Dorincourt and you shall help us with our horse-breaking. We need you to make the circle quite complete. I have bought a chair specially for you—one you can go to sleep in.

Dear, big, immense Owen, I am so sorry you could not come.

Your disappointed,
Fluffina.

The Mr. Townesend referred to was Stephen Townesend, a doctor who had been connected with St. Bartholomew's

Hospital, and the son of a clergyman. Though, at the insistence of his family, he had been educated for the medical profession, and had come through his hospital training with honor, his heart was not in medicine. He was deeply interested in the stage, and had had considerable success in an unprofessional way. Eager to take up a career as an actor, he was going through a tremendous mental struggle in an endeavor to decide between the wishes of his family and his own impulses when Mrs. Burnett met him, and the matter was about to be decided in a rather heroic manner. He was to be shipped away from temptation, so she always understood, by being billeted as ship's surgeon on a vessel bound for South Africa. The glamour of this situation quite overwhelmed the Romantick Lady. That a deep-seated and serious ambition should be thwarted, and a life warped by being starved of the thing for which it hungered most, was more than she could stand. She had a sensitiveness to sorrow and disappointment in others which gave her always a sort of desperate feeling that it must be relieved, and by her if there seemed no one else to help. This emotion was often an overpowering one, and once in a while lifted her actions to a plane of altruism that to less romantically minded people seemed beyond calm reason.

She enlisted herself in this man's cause, as if she were a female St. George, vowed to the destruction of the dragons that were across his path, and preventing him from achieving his heart's desire. She was, of course, very much in the theatrical world of London, and it seemed it would be quite easy for her to get him the opportunities he had so much desired to show his abilities on the professional stage. This she engaged herself to do, more by implication than by actual promise. And as she had much business with theatrical people, and had no business agent or secretary in England, it seemed quite possible that he might be useful

to her as a sort of representative during such time as he was getting his start. So, instead of his being routed to Africa, as a ship's surgeon, away from the alluring stage possibilities of London, he found himself put in close touch with London things theatrical, and influential managers, as a sort of secretary-agent to the season's most sought-after woman dramatist.

At the time of the letter to Owen Lankester, he had just begun to assume some of Mrs. Burnett's business responsibilities, making occasional visits to Dorincourt from London. Gordon, upon whom Mr. Townesend was riding, was a horse she had gotten from a London establishment, and boarded at the Club's stables. He was a spirited chestnut cob, and Mrs. Burnett, in addition to riding him occasionally, drove him to a red-and-black, high two-wheeled trap. Doubtless Gordon was "guaranteed kind and gentle," but Mrs. Burnett's horsemanship was by no means expert.

One afternoon, a few days after Vivian had left to join Lionel and enter school at Washington, the stableman brought Gordon and the high-wheeled trap to the door of Dorincourt, and Gordon's mistress started off for the station a mile or more away, to meet Mr. Townesend, who was to come up from London on an early train. Not long after, tradesmen driving down the road found Gordon standing with the trap upset, and a short distance behind him, in the ditch by the road, the apparently lifeless body of his mistress. They were just preparing to take the body into a near-by house when Mr. Townesend, worried at not having been met, came by in a station hack. Being a trained physician he immediately took charge, finding that his hostess was still living, even though seriously hurt. Fortunately no bones were broken, but there had been a severe concussion of the brain, due to the fall.

For three days she was unconscious, carefully guarded by Doctor Townesend and Liza Chiellini. The convalescence was slow; it was weeks before she could be moved back to Dorincourt from the house where she was first taken. When she was finally able to write a little she sent the following letter to her boys, addressed to Lionel:

Dorincourt, Bellagio,
Surrey.

My darling Boy:

My dear, big Boy, I cannot write a letter but this is to set my Darling's mind at rest and *show* him that his Dearest is not so stupid from her fall that she does not love and think of him.

It was beautiful, naughty Gordon who nearly killed me. Papa and Vivian will tell you who he is. He threw me so far on my poor little head that I had concussion of the brain, and was quite stiff and unconscious from Saturday till Tuesday.

. . . Mamma can still think of her dear boys, and is so glad they are happy together. Kiss each other for your Dearest, and love each other very tenderly for her.

My head swims and I cannot see to go on, but I must tell my Dears one thing. When I was unconscious so long and no one could make me know anything, there was one weary, little, low cry I kept up that those who were with me say they can never forget. I kept moaning, "Oh, dear! Oh, dear!" over and over—and lately I have gradually had a memory of why it was. It was something about my dear boys—I thought there was some thing they might want which their Dearest could not get for them and it troubled me so. I can remember hearing that poor little voice moaning, "Oh, dear! Oh, dear!"

See, Sweetest, how I love you. When almost death itself only brings my darlings closer to my heart—though I do

not know I am alive to love them. I miss you both so much. I love you both so dearly. I am

Your

VERY DEAREST.

With Doctor Townesend in constant attendance, nurses from St. Bartholomew's Hospital, Doctor Owen Lankester and other physicians in consultation, she was finally brought through without, as it seemed at the time, any serious consequences. She returned to 44 Lexham Gardens as soon as she could be moved, and she wrote to Kitty from there:

44 Lexham Gardens,
So. Kensington, S. W.

MINE DARLING KITTY:

. . . Perhaps I feel it more because I am given to desperate little fits of depression. Awful little fancies creep out of the corners sometimes and stare at me. They say, "Suppose that awful blow stunned that vivid, vital part of her brain that made the stories." It is so ghastly to think of.

The powers that be would not hear of my trying to write, but I will confess I have been languidly scribbling a little. I sit in a deep, low chair with five or six cushions supporting my head and my arms, etc., and I have my paper on an invalid's "literary machine," which you are supposed to be able to have put in any position, but can't at all. The great point is that I cannot bend my head the least without becoming dizzy and so I am arranged so I can write without bending it.

But I have, by the most gradual instalments,—a page or two at a time—written nearly the first act of a new play which is said to be lovely—but what crushed me during the dark days especially, was that I did not seem to get excited about it. I suppose I expect too much. I am told so with

such gently humorous scolding by the person who has, so to speak, carried my concussed brain in his pocket day and night for the last three months, and he is a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons, and ought to know.

Don't tell any one I have tried to write because of course it seems rather mad—but I have really done it in such an idle sort of way and the F. R. C. S. has always been at my elbow to admonish and command. A solemn promise has been wrung from me to stop the instant I am giddy or have the tiniest pain.

I should like to tell you some time about that curious time when I first began to be conscious. It was such an interesting, queer mental condition. I felt as if I had just been born—and when they said I was conscious I wasn't really half the time. Luisita tells me lots of things I did that I never knew at all. My mind seemed like a star on a cloudy night—a moment it shone clear and then the clouds passed before it and blotted it out. During the days when I knew nothing and nobody and only lay uttering heart-rending moans, hour after hour, Luisita says she made me stop for a moment two or three times by kneeling by me and saying distinctly, "Lionel, Vivian, Lionel. Vivian wants his Dearest."—And then, when she wanted to make me swallow things, she talked to me about Lionel and Vivian until she fancied she had arrested some atom of concussed mind and then put the hospital "feeder" between my lips. I would try to swallow when she said, "Take this for Lionel. Drink this for Vivian."

I have not the least recollection of anything like that, but I remember once hearing the most plaintive voice moaning, "Oh, dear! Oh, dear!" and it was my voice, and I was moaning because I was tormented by some wandering thought that when they were young men they might want something all my love could not give them.

I wish you could see the sweet letters they write me. Lionel is developing into a wonder of a correspondent, and his letters are so darling I get so homesick to see them both.

But winter London was not the place for her. She became more and more depressed, and finally with Luisita she was sent to the Riviera and Italy, making the journey by short stages.

The sunny Mediterranean winter did wonders for her and she was soon herself again, but by no means strong enough to bear the second blow that fate was about to give her.

CHAPTER XIX

A MOTHER VERSUS DEATH

The boys were now in the eighth grade in the Franklin School at Washington, with Miss Ella Morgan as their teacher, living, of course, at 1770 Massachusetts Avenue with their Dad.

Soon after she had reached Mediterranean shores, Mrs. Burnett received this from Lionel:

DEAR MAMMA:

I write this letter to you while I am in school. I received the money that you sent me and I want to thank you for it. I spent it for electric goods. We do everything by electricity. I light my gas by electricity.

If you and Lisa [Chiellini] want to get me anything, I want it electric. Anything that has to do with electricity.

I got Lisa's letter this morning and I will answer it soon.

I am getting on very well in school. Miss Morgan says that I get along twice as easy this year as I did last year. The lessons do not seem so hard.

When are you coming back? I hope it will be soon. If it hurts you to write letters, I wish you would not do it. I don't want you to do anything that will harm you. Please do not do it for my sake.

. . . Will you get Lisa to get me some books on electricity and send them to me, because I like to do experiments. Papa gave me two books on electricity but I have very nearly exhausted them, and so after I have finished them I will not have anything to get experiments from. . . .

I don't think I have anything more to say, except it may be that I want you to come home soon.

Love to all and lots of love to Lisa and you.

Your loving son, L. BURNETT.

The boys' enthusiastic experiments with electricity had carried them far. Besides putting contraptions on the burners to light the gas by sparks, they, at one time, had the whole house so wired with burglar-alarms that, after they had set the master switch in their bedroom, a cat could hardly step on the vestibule mat without waking up the whole neighborhood with the buzzing of bells. They were also playing with printing, and after owning a couple of small hand-presses, found themselves seriously interested. Hence this characteristic letter from Lionel:

1770 Massachusetts Avenue,
February 26, 1890.

DEAR MAMMA:

I want to tell you about something Vivian and I have set our hearts on. Vivian and I have taken to printing a great deal. We have been printing, I think, since the first part of Jan. and have made quite a little money, besides the pleasure we got out of it. Of course, we did not have all the type and things we wanted, so we had to buy them. I saw an advertisement in a paper of a man who sold presses and things, and so I sent to him for a price list. In this price list there were some printing outfits. One of these I am going to tell you about. It costs quite a large sum, but Vivian and I think we can make enough money with it to pay for it. This is the outfit:

O. K. Rotary Job Press	$100.00
Furniture	2.00
Hand Roller	.50
Black and Colored inks	2.00

Twelve fonts of type	24.45
Eleven type cases and cabinet	12.00
Leads, bodkin, and tweezers	1.50
Six gauge pins and screw driver	.60
Mallet, planer, and oil can	.75
Composing stick	1.00
Can of cleaning preparation	.30
Lead cutter	2.00
Rules, dashes, borders	2.90
	$150.00

I know the price of it startles you, but I have a way to get over it. Vivian says that he will give up his bicycle that you said you were going to get us when we came over, and I am willing to do the same, and I think that will make the amount. I think Papa will pay the express for us, which will be quite a good deal, I think.

If you will do it, will you cable yes, for we, of course, want it very much. We have talked with Papa about it and he said that he thought it was very good, but that it cost such a lot. He said he would get it for us if he could afford it.

I send you a little book I printed on the press that was given me Christmas before last. I call it "Job Lots," because it is composed of all kinds of poetry. I put in "There was an old man up a tree," because I know you always laugh at it. I printed the book all by myself. . . .

Your loving son,

L. Burnett,
Job Printer.

It is needless to say that permission was given to buy the press, and it, with its outfit, formed the basis of a printing business in the basement of the house that grew to a considerable size for a boyish venture, issuing a weekly paper (with advertisements), printing many invitations, pro-

grammes and tickets, and issuing two books, bearing the imprint of "The Press of the Moon."

There were great deeps in Mrs. Burnett's love for Lionel. As her first baby he had been the marvel of all marvels, and there was something in his character, as he grew older, that made a special appeal to her heart. He was high strung, sensitive, and emotional, and not able to protect himself very well from the knocks and disappointments of the world. He had more illnesses than Vivian, and they were more serious. She felt that he needed her. Weakness always found a champion in her, and it was Lionel's weakness that bound her to him. He turned to her instinctively for help, and she gave overflowing response. She felt she was his first, his *only* line of defense against a world he seemed not able to battle with.

The year 1890 brought one of the first onslaughts of La Grippe. Lionel fell victim to the epidemic, along with all the other members of the family. His recovery was slow, and when the doctor thought him well and allowed him to go out, there was a relapse. This unhappy news of course came to his convalescing mother in Europe. With an undercurrent of apprehension, she wrote him from Rome.

Hotel Minerva, Rome.
March 28, 1890.

My darling Big Boy:

I hope so much that by the time this letter reaches you it will find you quite well again. Sweetheart, dear, it will never do for my Boy to be ill while I am away from him. I should be ill again myself. I thought my journey had done me so much good, but when Papa's letter told me my Boy was not so well, I was so troubled that I was dizzy for three hours, and all my nice pink color that had come into my cheeks went away, and left me looking quite different.

It is because I am not with you that I am so troubled. I know you want me and I want my Darling more than words could tell.

. . . I am going to write to you very often, because I want you to feel as if my arms were round you and I was sitting by your bed telling you about the things I have seen.

. . . I hope it made you happy when you got my cable to say I had sent the cheque for your printing machine. I want you to be cheerful and try only to think of all the pleasure you are going to have, and that you have a Dearest who thinks all the time of her boys, and how she can make them happy.

. . . I am going to send you with this letter some photographs of the Carnival at Nice, and some of Pompeii, and I am going to try to find you some *construczione*, because it might amuse you to put them together when you stay in the house. But soon it will be lovely Spring weather.

. . . I shall send you a cable every now and then to show you I am near enough to talk to you. My sweet Big Boy—My Darling One.

DEAREST.

Lionel, eager to spare her anxiety or pain, sent this brief message:

DEAR, DARLING MAMMA:

Don't worry about your big boy, as you call me. I went down stairs in the kitchen today, and I went out of the room I sleep in and stayed in another room, and I also walked about in Papa's office. I am getting better, and Dr. Busey says he wants me to get out very soon.

Don't bother about me, darling Sweet. What I want you to do is to get well, and not to worry about me. I also

want to see you very much, but don't start until you feel well.

Lots of love and kisses,

Your darling boy,

LIONEL BURNETT.

And then came the crushing blow; further relapses and the diagnosis by the physicians that Lionel's trouble was "galloping consumption," with no hope of recovery. Of course, she would not accept this verdict. Despite her own invalidism she engaged passage for America immediately, sailing April 5, 1890. During her long voyage across the water the Mother saw, with a bitter clearness, how impossible it would be for Lionel to face Death. Hence she made, for herself, and for all who should be near him, the firm resolve that he should never do that thing. Come what might, there should be happiness, hope, comfort, love all about him, and he should pass without having to agonize through months, or perhaps years, of the chill horror of knowing that he was marked.

And so she came into his little room in the Washington house, with a smile on her face, a gay dress, flowers in her hand, and everything in her look and manner to say that her Big Boy would soon be well.

The country's greatest specialists were called in; a few weeks were spent at Atlantic City; a few in Philadelphia, and then, accompanied by a famous doctor, she took her Big Boy to Goebersdorf, the best recommended sanatorium in Europe, in the pine forests of South Germany. Luisita and Vivian were with her to help comfort her. Doctor Stephen Townesend and a sweet little nurse from St. Bartholomew's Hospital in London joined them at Southampton. Goebersdorf proved fruitless, and a further search for help was made at Marienbad, in Bohemia, where Vivian had to leave to go back to school in America.

What this all meant to the imagination she has herself told. Out of this anguished period there remains that fragment of a story, written later to ease her mind, and, because of the grief it bore, never finished, called "His Friend." Into it she wrote with but little disguise her own sorrow-stricken soul. These quotations are from the first chapter, which pictures an interview between the sick boy's mother and a world-famous physician, whom she had summoned, as a last resort, to her beautiful villa on the Mediterranean.

. . . The doctor glanced about him and was told much.

"It will all be made simple to him in the passing," he said, when the door opened and the mother of his patient came in. She came to him with a thin, flexible looking hand held out and when their eyes met and he looked into her's he saw within them the thing he had felt in her letter; the something which made her seem not like a woman but like an intense, elemental force. It was a force which seemed to have passed through the world and thrust it back, having done with it.

"Thank you," she said, looking at him as if he were not quite man and body and there were no barriers to pass. "Thank you. You came because you understood. I knew if I could make you understand you would come."

"You made me understand," he answered. . . .

. . . "Yes," she went on, "you know what it is like, but I did not until now. Six months ago he was radiantly strong and well. He is only a boy and he has been absolutely happy all his life; you know what a perfect creature of his age is. He was full of boyish pleasures and plans and vigorous delights. The days were not long enough to hold them all.

. . . "Then," she said, "this began." At first it seemed only a little cold, a little fever. He had never been ill in

his life. I need not tell you the things that happened, how subtle and gradual they were, and yet how quick. Oh! how quick! I used to hear him cough a little in the morning and sometimes at night. He began to feel tired. One morning he fell asleep upon a sofa and when I went and stood by him, suddenly I saw that all his bloom was gone—that splendid bloom. He opened his eyes while I was by his side and he said, 'Why do you look like that? I don't know why I was tired enough to fall asleep. I seem to be always tired now.' In the middle of the night I went to look at him as he lay in bed. His hair clung to his forehead in damp locks and his pillow was wet. My heart stood still. Since then I have been fighting every hour. I would not believe. I said it could not be.

. . . "What has he been told?" the doctor asked, turning his head quickly.

"Nothing," in a tense level voice. "Nothing. That is why I must explain to you. During these six months I have travelled from place to place with him. I have seen one specialist after another. Then I was told that there was no appeal from you, and I wrote to you. Thank you again for coming. After you have told me what your decision is, I have another thing to say to you. Whatsoever you conclude I ask you to let him gather nothing from your face. Will you come to him now?"

. . . . . .

. . . "This is Noel, Doctor Wynne," his mother said. "Noel, now we are all right. Doctor Wynne has come from London to tell us what we are to do."

But that he was a self-controlled man Doctor Wynne would almost have started. It was as if another creature spoke. Her voice was full of cheer and freshly young; there was not a note of pain in it, or anything that was not

normal and perfectly happy. Turning to look at her he saw that her face was like that of another creature also. The most uncomplex ordinarily happy woman might have smiled so. There was even a touch of carelessness in both voice and eyes. The doctor understood his cue.

"Let us sit down and talk about this," he said to the boy as they shook hands.

Noel laughed a boy's rather shy laugh.

"I hope you can do me some good," he said. "I don't know what's the matter. I never was like this before."

. . . . . .

. . . When they entered the salon she went to the couch and sat down as before. Her face had changed again and he noticed that she seemed a little out of breath. She put her hand up to her throat.

. . . Her large eyes devoured his face and her voice was hoarse.

"See," she said. "I know it is mad, but every time I see a new authority I go through this. I find myself thinking that perhaps he may tell me something—something different. I am hoping now—yes even now—God help me!"

He had never become used to saying the thing he had to say, and he found it hardest to say it to women who made no noise at all, but tried to hold themselves still and be reasonable.

"You want me to tell you the truth," he said. "I know that."

"Yes," she answered, not moving her eyes from his. "I must know the truth. You—are to be the last. The—time has come."

"He is very ill," he said, "very ill."

He heard a slight sound in her throat—a sound one would scarcely know how to give a name to.

"He will die?" she said.

"Yes," he replied, "he will die."

. . . She looked out of the open window through the yellow green of the bamboos to the blue of the sea.

"Then I must make my plans," she said, "and I must make them carefully."

"You have plans?" he asked.

". . . He is only a boy," she said, as she had said it before, "and he has been perfectly happy all his life. He has never thought of Death. He is not much more than fifteen years old—and he is going to die!"

She walked the length of the room again in dead silence. Then she suddenly stopped and looked at the doctor.

"They cannot understand it—they cannot believe it," she said. "We can because we have lived long enough to be tired—but when they are so young—so young—the Spring of Life in them wells up so strong—they cannot understand. If I were to kneel beside him and talk all day and all night he could not—could not think it true."

". . . See," she said, "some people have one thing—some another. Some women have the world, or love, or ambition. I had none of them. It all ended for me when I was almost a child, not much older than Noel.

"I expected and believed in things which were not in the world. I thought they were—but they were not. That is all. Then I had Noel. I had just been left a widow when he was born. You don't know what he was to me. He seemed a sort of expression of that thing which is not on earth. We seemed to know something strange about each other. Do you know the one thing I could not bear was the thought that pain or terror might come to him. I could not bear it! That was because I knew that he could not bear it. He was a magnificent little creature but he had a curious nature. He knew how to suffer too much.

". . . I am going to say a strange thing to you," she said. "Perhaps you will think I have gone mad, but it does not matter what I seem—nothing matters if I can make it easier for him.—What is this dying?"

Wynne almost started—but the next moment he recovered himself. He saw that, strained as her mood was, the thought in her mind was an intensely clear one.

"You do not wish to hear the technical things, which are all I could tell you," he said.

"I want to know one thing," she answered. "Is it—is it pain?"

"No," he said. "Life is pain—not Death. Dying is but the gradual ceasing of the power to suffer—the ceasing. That is my theory, and I have seen it again and again and again. Sometimes it seems to me that there is nothing else—but that quiet ceasing of the breath, that slow closing of the eyes. But it surely is not pain. I wish the whole human race felt it as I do. It would lift a load."

She put out her hand as if involuntarily and touched his.

"Do you believe that if a creature could be kept from fear—from the knowledge of what was coming—if he were watched, and spared all pain that science or thought could save him—if all about him were kept bright and no one wore a sad face—if at the last moment he saw one looking as he had always seen one—smiling unafraid—do you believe he might pass away and not know—fall asleep unconsciously on earth and awaken—if he did awaken—in that other country—not even knowing how it happened? Tell me if you believe that might be."

The eyes of the great specialist had slowly widened and filled with light as she spoke.

". . . Do I wholly understand you?" he said. "You must not—I must not let you—deceive yourself."

"No," she answered. "I am not deceiving myself; I

have not said all. For months I would not believe this thing to be true. I fought with all the power that was in me. I did not give up easily. But now I know. I cannot stop this thing which is going on. Death is stronger even than Love, there—but Love is stronger in this—that it can stand between."

The doctor rose involuntarily and stood gazing at her, his great brain aiding his great heart. He began to see what her meaning might be and in his gradual comprehension there was a sense of awe. The daring thought he saw at work in this woman's soul had haunted his own brain many a year.

". . . It can stand between," he murmured.

"I am not talking wildly," she said. "What I am going to do can only be accomplished by practical means—by forethought, by using all scientific aid, by iron self-control. I know all it will mean. On one side of his bed stands the figure all the world so shudders at and grovels before. It has its darts and sword and spear—all the weapons the Ages have given it in their terror. I who stand on the other side have only one thing—that strange passionate thing which is born in a woman when her child is born. After it has come to life, I do not think even Death can conquer it. It cannot conquer it in me. He *shall* not suffer—he shall not die—for he shall never know that Death has smitten him—if it is possible to keep the secret from him."

". . . Yes—yes," muttered Wynne, still staring at her. "There are many things. We have learned a great deal—not all things—but many that are merciful."

"You must tell me all of them," she said. "As you cannot stay with us you must tell me all that I must do—write it all down, so that no rule can ever be forgotten. I must know the climate that is best for him, the food it is safe to tempt him with—the stimulants he needs—the

temperature—the effort he can make without fatigue,—everything—everything."

"I can do that," Doctor Wynne answered.

. . . She crossed the room to a writing-desk and brought back to him a paper.

"There are the notes I have made," she said. "I have observed him closely. His temperature—his strength, his sleep, his appetite, all these changes are marked."

". . . Ah!" exclaimed Wynne, "that is not easy."

"No," none of it will be easy," was her reply. "He is intelligent, he has always been strong and active and full of the interest and delight of young living. It is I—I—" touching her breast lightly with her forefinger, "who must learn so to fill his hours with pleasure and distraction that he will not have dull moments in which to realize how existence changes for him. No, it will not be easy."

She put her hands up as if involuntarily, and covered her face for a few moments, standing in silence. . . .

From Marienbad Lionel was taken by stages to Paris. From Paris she wrote to Vivian:

16 Rue Christophe Colombe,
Paris.

My Vivvie Dear:

Lionel is reading and I have crept away from him to see if I can snatch a few minutes to write to my far away boy and tell him that I received his letter last night and I never forget him and always love him, however deep my trouble is.

We came to Paris four weeks ago because it was too cold at Marienbad and too hot to go to the South of France, and I knew I could make Lionel comfortable here at least until the weather was cooler.

We have quite a beautiful and homelike apartment, and some good, quiet servants, who do all they can. . . . But

it is very difficult to find anything our poor boy can eat. Mamma racks her brains to invent things and takes her own plate to him to coax him into eating something from it—but try as we will, he *cannot* eat enough, and during the last two weeks has changed very much.

. . . You know he always wanted me to be near him, but during the last four or five weeks it has seemed as if he could not bear me to be away from him a moment. I sleep in the room opening into his and I ask the nurse to call me in the night if he wants me, and then I go and hold him in my arms and soothe him until he is quiet, because no one else can comfort him now.

. . . He has a mournful little way of calling "Mamma" that would bring me to him if I were dying on my bed. If I move away from his side he says, "Oh! *where* are you going? Don't go, Mamma darling." I think I would never move away at all, but you see I have to spend so much money that I feel very anxious to be able to write something.

I have tried everything to amuse him for a few hours each day, but it is useless. I had to go to London on important business—to see Mr. Guedalla—and I ransacked the shops and bazaars for things for him. I had a beautiful model engine made for him by a model maker. I had the pieces left separate and a little unfinished and brought him tools so that he could put them together himself while he was in bed—and I sat by him and filed for him. It amused him a couple of days and the engine is beautiful. I also filled a big box full of things. It is called the Fairy Box, and he does not know what is in it, but every now and then I go and bring something out.

. . . The last three days we have been quite happy. There is an Association in London for visiting and helping the very poor children who are invalids, and I was so interested when I heard of it. I wrote to the Secretary and

sent five pounds in Lionel's name and the Secretary wrote such a long, nice letter to me, and sent me some reports, and I went to their office and spent a whole day in going to see the poor children with the head visiting nurse.

. . . I thought it would be so nice if Lionel could interest himself in making little things to send them. He would if he were not too weak. But it interests him to see me do things, and these last days we have been making the most splendid picture book. I bought a whole lot of beautiful pictures in the Rue de Rivoli, and Lisa made white cotton pages and bordered them with gold paper and Lionel cut the pictures for a little while until he was tired and then he lay and watched while I grouped them and gummed them in. He superintended and criticized the grouping and he was quite entertained and happy. I have not seen anything else amuse him so much.

. . . My poor dear! It is so sad to see him. Yesterday I read your letter to him and he did so admire it, but it made him cry. He said, "He is such a funny boy. I could not write a letter like that." And then the tears rushed into his eyes and he said, "He is having such fun! I wish I could help Uncle Gimmie make a Nickel-in-the-slot machine. Oh, I wish I could get well! I wish I could get well!"

It was so hard for me because it breaks my heart to hear him . . . and I do so want to cry, and I dare not let him see me. I said, "Mamma's Boy will get well and he shall have everything he wants. He shall have an iron turning lathe and a Naphtha launch and everything he can think of." But he put his head on my shoulder and cried, "I don't want anything, darling, only to get well."

Nobody will ever know what Mamma suffers. It is too hard to bear. I have found out that I really truly cannot get away from him to write, so I have made the plan of getting up in the morning *very* early, when it is quite dark,

and everyone else is asleep. I have a fire laid over night in the room where I write and I light it myself and sit with my feet in Lionel's fur lined foot warmer and two dressing gowns over my night dress and write by candle light. I think after a while I shall get so used to doing it that I shall not mind it. I *must* work. I buy nothing new for myself at all, and I go nowhere and see no one, but it costs so much to live as I must keep him.

. . . Do not think, my darling, that I do not think about you and love you when I cannot write. You are always close to my heart, but I am very unhappy, and I have a trouble that breaks down my strength.

I am so glad my one boy is well and happy. Be happy, my Sweet, and take care of the one boy I have left. Lionel sends his love to you and Papa and Uncle Charlie and Aunt Effie, and so do I.

Your

DEAREST.

During a short business trip to London, Dearest sent daily letters. Here is one:

44 Lexham Gardens,
South Kensington.
Friday, October 3, 1890.

BOYKIN DEAR:

I hope you woke up 'freshed and that it is as beautiful and fine in Paris as it is in London. It is really astonishing.

Uncle Stephen has just telegraphed to Bellagio to find out if Mr. Percy Smith is there so that we can write and ask him about Cannes. He is the Minister who seemed so nice and who had such a nice wife and was so fond of her. He spends all his winters at Cannes, where he has an English church.

You must not fret about Mammiekin just because she has been a little under the weather. She just had a "tummer" like Boy, and it is all right now.

Tonight I am going to the theatre with Polly and Daisy

and Uncle Stephen. We are going to see Henry Irving's new play, "Ravenswood," which is founded on Scott's "Bride of Lammermoor." I will tell you all about it when I come home.

Every day I am going to add something to the "Fairy Box" and we will have 'sprises all winter. I wonder if your first package has come, and if it has entertained you a little.

Uncle Stephen is going to write to you. Could Boykin write just about three words to Mamma? Just scribble them any way. Just say how Boy feels—that is all. I don't mean write a letter, because that tires you.

Darling one, Mamma's sweetheart, all this letter is full of kisses from

Your

DEAREST.

And his beloved Uncle Stephen wrote:

Boy, darling, good morning. I ordered the engine the other day and am going to see it tomorrow. I am glad to hear good account of you from Nurse.

You will remember the most important of the business matters on which your mother came to London. Well, the man she has to see is not in town, and will not be till early next week. But anyhow, it will only be some few days now until Mamma returns. We'll have a real jinks then. Good bye, Dearie.

Your

STEPHEN.

The end came, peacefully, at the Rue Cristophe Colombe house in Paris, December 7, 1890. She wrote somewhat later in a letter to her cousin, Emma Daniels, in Manchester:

". . . It will perhaps seem almost incredible to you as it does to others when I tell you that he never did find out. He was ill nine months but I never allowed him to know that I was *really* anxious about him. I never let him know that

he had consumption or that he was in danger—and when he died he passed away so softly and quickly that I know he wakened in the other world without knowing how he had left this one. I can thank God for that.

". . . I shall never get over it. I suffered too much. But I kept it up to the last. The day before he died he slept softly all day and said he was quite comfortable, only so sleepy.

"The last words he spoke to me were, "God bless Mammie," when we kissed each other good night. Early in the morning he coughed a little and when the nurse bent over him she saw the end had come. When I spoke to him and kissed him he gave one little sigh and was gone. I have to tell it briefly because I cannot bear to write more.

". . . His nurse is still with me, and his doctor seems like my brother. I shall never forget them and how they helped my dearest fellow to pass through death itself without fear or pain."

Uncle Stephen had indeed made himself indispensable to Lionel, and Lionel's mother. He used all his doctor's craft to keep the boy from suffering, and helped in every way to keep him amused and encouraged, and Boy left this earth feeling he had never had a friend so dear and kind as Uncle Stephen. This was one of the few solaces that Dearest had in her dark hours, making her feel that surely some good had come out of her wish to help her older—disappointed—Stephen boy. The experience and mutual sorrow inevitably drew the two closely together.

The body was laid in St. Germain Cemetery, in Paris, and with it, as it seemed at the time, all that was worth while in life. The mother was completely prostrated, and almost out of her mind. They took her out of Paris to the Riviera, where she had hoped to take Boy. She wrote to Lizzie Elliott:

Hotel Bellevue, Cannes, France.

. . . I have suffered so much I cannot forget it. I cannot get over it. My poor boy was so beautiful and so sweet. He grew lovelier every hour, and every hour we were dearer and nearer to each other.—Oh! *how* we loved each other! No one can know.

. . . Sometimes I want to come to America, but there seems no place in earth for me just now. This beautiful place—all the lovely places I know, have no attraction for me. There is only one place where I *want* to go and I think I shall reach it— It is where Lionel lies among his flowers at St. Germain.

Though physically she began gradually to mend, her grief seemed to remain with her undiminished. There are two note-books preserved, strange relics of her perturbed mind at this period, in which she wrote, as it were, talking to her Boy in another, happier world. A typical entry is that of March 14:

"*March 14th.* I have been reading Revelation again. I want to know about Boy's home. Darling, Mammie is not very well to-day but she is going to try to go on with her new play. I know you were always glad when I was happy with my work. You knew how unsatisfied I was if I could not work. I put on your silver ring that you made me when you were ill. I always wear it to write in. I feel as if it brought you near me. Do you come and look over my shoulder and help me? I try to feel that you do. You used to say, 'If I could only just be doing something for you, Dearest.'

". . . Help Mammie, Sweet. Help her with everything. You are an Angel and know everything and she is only a poor little Mammie who knows nothing but a few foolish things of earth. Help her to be good—show her how, my

Beauty Boy. Watch her all the time and take care of her.

". . . Are you beautifully happy now? That morning when you died it did not seem as if it hurt you, Pet. You only gave one soft sigh and closed your great, soft eyes. Did you feel me kiss you—did you hear me say our old good night—'Sleep well—wake up refreshed—God bless Boy'? What did you do then? Did you find you were standing somewhere all well—splendid and joyous and strong—not ill any more—not weak—not coughing—breathing freely soft pure air—just as you used to do when you were well—only with a wonderful joy in it? Did you know you were dead? Did you know all at once you were a young angel—or were you strangely, joyously surprised—not knowing? I hope the bright creature took you swiftly away from that room where Mammie was kneeling, sobbing and putting your arm round her neck—where it had not the life to stay. It slowly slipped away—and then she knew Boy was dead.

". . . Did I do right to hide from you that you were dying? It seemed to me that I *must* not give you the terror of knowing. You were only a boy then—and you were on earth and loved your life. I tried to carry you in my arms to the gates of Heaven, past Pain and Death, so that you would wake up to beautiful, strange surprise at your new, strong, happy body and the day that has no night, and the city whose gates are never closed.

"Was it beautiful, dear? Mamma gave you all her life and all her soul. Do you remember how you comforted me with your arms round my neck that day Uncle Stephen was so cross to me? He was always sweet to Boy, though, wasn't he? I forgave him all for that. 'Never mind, darling,' you said, '*we* are *always* friends. We are two *staffs* that always stand together.' How often we said that after-

wards. I loved it so. 'We are two staffs that always stand together.'"

When she saw her own boy slipping away she became dimly conscious that there must be some good to come out of all the misery his passing meant to her—and this feeling expressed itself in efforts to help unhappy people in the name of her Boy. There were hospitals in London that she heard of even while Lionel was still alive, and to these she sent money and toys in the Boy's name,—such as the Invalid Children's Aid, of which she became an active patron. She wrote to Vivian about it:

". . . It has just occurred to me as the newspapers must be full of the recent engagement of the Princess Mary to the Prince of Wales' eldest son, the Duke of Clarence and Avondale, it might interest you to see the pretty letter that kind little Princess wrote to your Mammie after we met at St. Monica's Home and I talked to her about my poor children and the Invalid Children's Aid.

"I told her some little stories about Lionel's 'friends' and she was so sweet and sympathetic and asked me to send her some of the Invalid Aid pamphlets. I sent some with a letter containing particulars and the enclosed is her answer to me.

"It ended by her becoming the Patroness of the Invalid Children's Aid, and as she is the only young Princess who is a Patroness of a Society, it is very helpful to them. She is very sweet and simple and girl like, and her mother, who is the Duchess of Teck, is immensely popular. The Duchess of Teck is the Queen's cousin, and was the beautiful Princess Mary of Cambridge."

Enclosed was the original of the following letter:

DEAR MRS. BURNETT: May 19, 1891.

Your charming and interesting letter touched me deeply. How you must have suffered, losing your dear child, and I

can well understand now what an intense happiness it must be to you to try and relieve poor little London children.

I will do my very best to help this excellent charity, and I hope next November to be able to send a grant of clothing from the Surrey Needlework Guild. Would you kindly let me know whether books and toys would be acceptable?

I read both the reports and will endeavour to make the charity known amongst my friends.

Believe me,

Yours sincerely,

VICTORIA MARY OF TECK.

[The present Queen of England.]

The Santa Monica's Home she had already become interested in through the Lankester family. There, in the memory of her son, she endowed a cot, and brought continual joy with her armfuls of toys and flowers when she came for her visit.

She had heard of a boys' club in Drury Lane, a pitiful slum district of London, and she found great solace in helping this club get a room for itself, and gave it a library with plenty of the best books, in Lionel's name. She wrote an article about this which was published under the title of "The Drury Lane Boys' Club" in *Scribner's Magazine*—and later republished in book form by "The Press of the Moon," under the direction of Vivian, with the assistance of some of the Washington boys, and printed on that press mentioned in Lionel's letter to his mother.

The unfinished story, "His Friend," had been started as a story of a rich, sick boy who had been comforted in his illness by the good he was able to do for a little slum boy, attacked by the same terrifying illness. Her cherished hope that Lionel might slip painlessly from this world to another that was radiant—without fear or sorrow—shaped itself

in another unfinished story to which she gave the title, "In a Fair, Far Country." In these few paragraphs from the opening chapters is much of her message:

"He lay in a boat that was white with a whiteness he had never seen—whiter than a dove's breast—whiter than the purest cloud—and floating onward softly. Above him was a strange, pure blue. The sea the white boat floated on was of sapphire fairness and the dreamy touch of an exquisite mist rested upon and faintly veiled it.

"He lay and looked out upon the beauty of it, and, undisturbed by any unrestful eagerness, wondered how he had been brought there and why—yes—and from where!

"And then he saw the Boatman.

"He stood at the prow of the boat—a wonderful, stately, gentle Presence, gazing with grave, sweet welcome into the Boy's upraised, peaceful eyes. His deep gaze and the strange beauty of his face were the embodiment of the noble maturity of many ripe years without a shadow of the weariness of decline. It was a beauty which might have existed ages, but which, with each age, had gained new depths and breadths of love, understanding and power. He was the splendor of fruition, free from the touch of earth, which is decay.

"This the boy saw while the boat floated onward softly—lightly over the deeps of sapphire clearness below and he lay looking at the marvel of his face. And he himself felt no wonder at the new, young wisdom which saw so much. It was as if there existed no barrier between his soul and this riper one—his young thought and that which was pure wisdom and long life's high result. He felt no timidity because he was so young. It was as if his youth, too, had shed some earthly shell and Youth and Age were one—each beautiful with its own beauty and full of the same freedom and love.

"This he knew as the Boatman's clear eyes gave him

welcome.—Yes, it was welcome to some new wondrous thing—this rapturous sense of Morning—Light and Life.

"And as they gazed at each other the Boatman spoke.

"The Boy rose to his feet. He was conscious of no touch of effort. There was only light, uplifting movement which was ecstacy in itself. He stood, poised like the spirit of a bird at the white boat's side. He looked out over the fair, far blueness touched with the aerial veil of mist. The light about him was such light as he had never known or dreamed. He himself seemed part with its radiance. What was it? What was the strange, exultant joy—the ecstasy of life—or lightness which filled him like a tide at flood? He extended his arms—his face upturned to the rapturous Morning blue above.

"'What is it?' he said, 'Where—*where* am I?'

"'Welcome,' said the Boatman, 'and great Joy!'

"Then he remembered. And yet, what he remembered seemed a thing so far away—so utterly apart from the Morning smiling now that though it was a memory of sadness he was strangely conscious that it brought him no shadow of pain. He looked at the Boatman with wondering eyes. 'I was not here,' he said. 'I had been ill so long. The room was so quiet, and my mother spoke to me. They were all waiting for something.—What were they waiting for?'

"'They call it Death,' the Boatman answered with great gentleness.

"'I was afraid of Death,' the boy said. 'Sometimes I was afraid that I should die. Whose Death were they waiting for?'

"'It was for yours,' the Boatman answered, even more gently still.

"'For mine?' the Boy said, a tender awe which was not fear growing in him. 'But I—I fell asleep—and now——'

"And then the Morning seemed to make all dazzling clear.

"'They think I died,' he cried. 'They think so.—And it is all over.—And I have awakened here!'

"'There is no Death,' the Boatman said. 'The sleep they call so is a gentle thing. You have passed it.'"

CHAPTER XX

AN ADVENTURE AS THEATRICAL MANAGER

Mrs. Burnett's work in the first months following Lionel's death was inspired by her desire to fulfil her implied promise to help Doctor Stephen Townesend in his dramatic career. She had had an idea for a play, and had indeed done a little work on it with Stephen during the anxious days in Goebersdorf, Marienbad, and Paris.

The title of the play was "The Showman's Daughter." The story was woven about an old, travelling showman, left widowed with a pretty daughter, who he resolves shall be brought up as a lady, in keeping with his improved fortunes. When she comes back from boarding-school to the fine new home he has prepared for her, she mistakes him for a servant. A love story twines around this situation, which is brought to a happy close when the father is made to realize that his daughter is not ashamed of him, but loves him for his kindly heart and his sacrifices.

Because she was in deep mourning, Mrs. Burnett took no part in the London social life of the season when she returned early in 1891, seeing only her closest intimates, and giving her attention chiefly to her charitable interests, and to "The Showman." The writing of the play proved a difficult task, and the producing of it still more so. Conditions in the London theatrical field made her decide that she would be her own producer. A factor in this decision was her desire that Stephen should have his opportunity for a London appearance in it, and there was strong likelihood that he might not be given a satisfactory part by a regular London manager. That she found her task of helping her

protégé not an easy one reveals itself in a confession to Vivian:

". . . Of course, Uncle Stephen takes care of my business and is very particular about things of that sort, but as for the rest, I feel as if I was the one who had to take care of him. He is so delicate and nervous and irritable, poor boy. But I have to remember when he seems to be unreasonable, that he was never anything but *perfect* to Lionel, and that he was his comfort and strength and beloved to the last minute. . . . There was one thing we never had at our house, and that was tempers. It makes a great difference in the atmosphere.'

The play was finished in the autumn of 1891. Mrs. Burnett personally undertook the selection and rehearsing of the cast, and this proved a wearisome and harassing task. A letter to Kitty Hall gives some idea of what the author-manager was going through at this time.

44 Lexham Gardens,
November 20, 1891.

DARLING:

I am so hard worked I cannot write a letter, but I must scribble you a word, just to tell you *why* I can't write, which word will probably take several pages. Did I tell you ——— was simply ——— in the part of ———? Well, he was, and he nearly killed me when I saw him play it. If he had done it in London the play would have been ruined. I have been working like a slave, rewriting bits here and there, seeing people and going into business details. Until you produce a play, you can never know what it means.

. . . Vivian has written me two low-spirited letters and they kept me awake all night. It seems he has fits of depression when he fancies all sorts of things are the matter with him. It distracts me so to hear it, because that was

what Lionel did the winter before he began to be ill. I nearly went out of my mind the night after I got Vivian's last letter. I *cannot* bear it if he gets ill. I am going to begin to send him cables every few days. He does so want me to come home.

. . . I must tell you the great thing. When ——— turned out such a failure, I had to look for a new Hurst, and as luck had it, every man who *might* have fitted the part was engaged. I had always told Stephen I knew he could act it, but he said it was too important a part for him to present himself to London with. He said, however, that he would understudy it, and if I liked he would try it in America. He began to study it and read some of the scenes to me, and I saw he *could* act it—and from the inside—not merely on the surface.

. . . He *is* a genius, I do believe. He really quite thrills me some times in the pathetic parts. I decided that he *must* do it in London, and finally convinced him that if I was willing to risk a thousand pounds on his success, he ought to believe in himself. We are having another week out of town so that he and the others can work into their parts.

But you may guess what I am going through with that poor, overstrung boy. He is excited and worried by everything. We are going to keep the thing as quiet as possible—I mean the fact that Hurst is not to be played by a London star—because there is much jealousy and spite among professionals, and, of course, the actors will all hate him before he does the part, and be ready to poison him when he has succeeded. But you can imagine how many chance speeches from outsiders crush him, or rankle.

Oh, how I pray the poor fellow may have a triumph. I shall feel I have not lived for nothing if I can help that one poor life into the sun. If I had done no other one thing in my life but help Lionel to die as he did, I should feel as

if I ought to be grateful to God for letting me live to do it—but if I can help Stephen to *live*, that will be another beautiful thing to have done."

The try-out of "The Showman" was had in Southport early in December, and the newspaper criticisms were highly favorable. Mrs. Burnett had engaged the little Royalty Theatre, in London, and in a way quite characteristic of her, had spent considerable money in redecorating it so that it should seem bright and cosy for her patrons. On the evening of January 6, 1892, the first London performance was given, and when the *London Times* of the next day was opened, anxiety as to the play's London success was set at ease. Clement Scott, really dramatic dictator of the day, reviewed it pleasantly and favorably. There was much praise for Stephen Townesend, who played as "Will Dennis," taking the name of her old Washington friend. The cast:

Sir Arthur Bradwardine	John Beauchamp
Geoffrey Romney	Reeves Smith
Adolphus Gadsby	H. Eversfield
Jukes	Robert Namby
Partridge	Lawrence Caird
James	Cecil Roe
Lady Montaben	Ruth Rutland
Linda Hurst	May Whitty
Joe Hurst	Will Dennis
Mrs. Bonney	Mr. Edmund Phelps
Amelia Bonney	Mr. C. Claire

There followed a few days of pleasant work in smoothing out all roughness in the performance and text, while the size of the audiences steadily grew. Then, with a success right within her reach, another blow! The Duke of Clarence, the most popular boy of the royal family, died, and immediately the whole United Kingdom went into the

deepest mourning. The case of a play just starting, such as "The Showman," was, of course, virtually hopeless, and it closed, with a considerable deficit, even though it was an actual dramatic success. So Mrs. Burnett's hopes were dashed—and not so much because of her own financial losses, as because the opportunity to help Stephen to a real stage success had been snatched away from her. The net result of the venture was that Stephen had one more circumstance to justify him in his frequent declaration that he was "always unlucky."

She felt that Vivian just then needed her most, so, leaving a disconsolate actor-and-secretary behind her to take care of her literary and dramatic affairs, she sailed for America on March 15, 1892, and was most enthusiastically received by her family in the house at 1770 Massachusetts Avenue, Washington. There she had her husband and her boy, her lovely home, her soothing, cheerful Effie, Charlie Rice, Will Dennis, and a host of old-time intimates who adored her for herself, and admired her for her achievements. Kitty and the dear Hall family were within reach, and altogether her surroundings were such as to soothe and rest her.

Thanks to her innate physical strength, and her natural buoyancy of spirit, she began to return to her normal frame of mind, and to be able to work on the short sketches which she had been writing under the title, "Children I Have Known," including "Giovanni and the Other," and "Two Days in the Life of Piccino," each of which later headed volumes of short stories. They had proved very successful, and had kept her going, from a writing point of view, and financially, during the tragic days of Lionel's illness and the years of "The Showman" following. Out of this series sprang the book which she now took up, the Memories of the Mind of a Child, under the title of "The One I Knew

the Best of All," from which quotations were made in the early chapters.

There was a brief little spring season of quiet entertainment at the Massachusetts Avenue house, Mrs. Burnett laying off her deep mourning for quiet colors—and then the heat of the city drove her away. A pretty cottage was found for her and Vivian on the beach at Swampscott, quite near her old stamping-ground, Lynn, and there she worked happily at "The One I Knew," and laid plans for further stories and plays.

CHAPTER XXI

A BLOW OF FATE AVERTED

Mrs. Burnett's mode of life had gradually taken on an international character. Through her long sojourns in England and on the Continent, she had built up a wide acquaintance across the water, and also business relations which were important. She felt the tug of these European friendships when she was on the American side of the water, and moreover, she had a sympathy with English and continental methods of living which made her, after a time in the new country, feel that she wanted the quiet repose of the old. She could not, in fact, feel content living permanently on either side of the water.

She set sail in May, 1893, again for England, taking with her sister Edith, who, after many years of separation, had come East from her California home to pay Frances a visit. Frances had already interested herself in Edith's youngest son, Ernest, an inventive genius, and had been much affected, as was natural at this time, by Edith's loss of her youngest child, a beautiful and talented girl of six. "The Glade," a vine-covered house, set among trees and a garden close to the Thames, and just across the water from Hampton Court, was found for her by her English friends, and she quickly escaped from the responsibilities of the London season and took possession of it. How the place appealed to her is amusingly told in the first paragraphs of a short magazine article she wrote:

"I do not think it is generally known that last year I took Hampton Court Palace for the summer . . . and I may as well mention here to my audience that I did not

take it quite in the regular way . . . in fact, I took it through the agency of Messrs. Giddy & Giddy, who thought they were renting me until the end of October a pretty red house surrounded by lawns and trees on the opposite side of the Thames. This house was called 'The Glade,' and at The Glade I kept my trunks, my servants and my carriage. There I slept and took my meals, and there my letters were addressed—but it was Hampton Court Palace I really took for the summer, and it was the people who lived in Tudor and Stuart times who were my intimates, . . . Everybody who made himself or herself interesting by cutting off people's heads, or having his or her own head cut off, lived at Hampton Court Palace. Henry took Anne Boleyn there and spent a brief honeymoon of a year with her, after which she was promptly decapitated. Catherine Howard ran shrieking along the corridors to throw herself at his feet in the Royal Closet in the chapel where he was hearing mass, to plead for her life—and was borne shrieking back by the guards who overtook her. Charles I ran away from Hampton Court where he was kept a State prisoner and a year later his head fell on the scaffold at Whitehall. Bloody Mary started there for the heir who was never born.

". . . Somehow, when one wandered about the Palace, one always found oneself lingering longest in the Beauty Chamber, and dwelling with a curious feeling upon faces, to all of which Sir Peter gave the same soft oval, the same infantine complexions, the same cupid's bow for a mouth, the same languishing eyes and the same unreserve of shoulders.

". . . Pepys in four volumes always lay upon a little table in the Morning Room at The Glade, except at such times as odd volumes of him sauntered with me under Charles' oaks, or by the Long Water, or sat with me in the deep windows in the King's Audience Chamber or Queen

Mary's Closet or the King's Gallery. . . . And with Pepys' assistance it was easy to imagine 'My dearest Lady Castlemaine' loitering there—without her helmet—perhaps gathering the roses and passion flowers clambering over the long, old, red wall—and to fancy that one heard the laughter of the beautiful Mistress Stewart who seems to have romped and giggled a good deal with the court of gentlemen who played blind man's buff and hunt the slipper with her, and built her card houses."

The Glade was, however, so to speak, only a stepping-stone, and Mrs. Burnett began to feel that she needed a permanent *pied-a-terre* in England—possibly a house in London. Owen Lankester undertook to make some inquiries, and eventually a house was taken at 63 Portland Place. It was adjacent to the Chinese Embassy; a fine high-ceilinged residence with a pure Adam interior, imposing mahogany doors, wide halls, and, underneath, kitchens and long, underground passages leading out toward the Mews (or stable alley) behind.

It was such a house as would specially appeal to her. There was "an atmosphere" about it, particularly about the cellars, rightly plural, because there were many of them, and they were of stone and vaulted. And when you left the kitchen and began wandering further among the black corridors and chambers, *that* was something to give you a sensation. It gave Mrs. Burnett a real one when she first made the excursion, and thereby hangs a tale, one of the most thrilling tales Mrs. Burnett ever wrote—"A Lady of Quality." That Lady had her inception in a dark back chamber, revealed at the end of one of the corridors by the chance scratching of a match. "What a place to hide the body of a man you had accidently killed," she remarked to the group of guests that she had taken on this "spooky" excursion, down-stairs, as a part of the evening's

entertainment. The seed of the story was planted, but, as was often the case with her, took its own time to grow.

It was at this time that she began her long friendship with Ella and Madge Hepworth-Dixon, daughters of William Hepworth-Dixon, historian and traveller, whose home, at this time presided over by his charming and intellectual widow, had been a rendezvous for explorers, editors, journalists, critics, politicians, in fact, unusual and interesting people of all sorts. The acquaintance began with Ella Dixon soliciting an interview.

That the interview did not get itself written exactly to suit the interviewed is evident from the letter:

Monday.

DEAR MISS HEPWORTH-DIXON:

If you and your sister would be lovely dears and come to see me tomorrow afternoon I would explain to you about the alterations, and if my cutting out has made the article too short or has done anything else dangerous, perhaps I could remedy it. I was in such a hurry to post the package in time that I was afraid I ran risk of not doing you justice—and when one sees one's chatter in cold ink one often discovers perilous indiscretions that are mere nothings in conversation, but which a newspaper column gives a new aspect to.

I found several things I had said would not do at all, and they were so combined with the things that would do, that I had to rewrite them. . . .

Mrs. Burnett and sister Edith, after much anguished struggling with slow-moving British carpenters and decorators, managed to get into the Portland Place house in the early fall of 1893, just as the London winter season was

beginning. They spent a few weeks setting the establishment in order, and giving a little dinner party or two to London intimates, and then hurried back to America, sailing on December 9th in order to be home so that Vivian could have a real Christmas.

This was, from a literary point of view, one of the few "fallow" years of Mrs. Burnett's life. There was no big book upon the stocks, "De Willoughby" still being reluctant, and what she wrote were short, imaginative little articles, mostly about children, given their value chiefly by her sympathetic human touch, and her ever-abiding humor.

In May, 1894, Mrs. Burnett, accompanied by Edith, returned to London, naturally eager to spend her first London season in the fine house at 63 Portland Place. Vivian, preparing to enter Harvard, was left behind to divide his summer months between vacation and study for his final examinations.

The real intimacy of her friendship with Israel Zangwill began at this time. Zangwill she had met years before; he had befriended her in the Chamber of Horrors at Madame Tussaud's Wax Works exhibition, but she had seen him infrequently. He was writing a column of literary criticism for the *Pall Mall Gazette* under the title of "Without Prejudice," essaying at drama, and making powerful little stories of his race. These latter were published in a book with the name "Children of the Ghetto." Mrs. Burnett wrote him, evidently just after the issue of the book was announced:

63 Portland Place, W.,
Friday.

DEAR MR. ZANGWILL:

I have just returned home with it under my arm. In my latest frock and very latest hat dashed I down to Hatchard's, entering breathlessly, demanding, "Have you Mr.

L. W. Yéda

I. Zangwill

Zangwill's new book, which is out today?" I tried to look at him like a startled fawn with tears in its eyes. Evidently I accomplished something, for he smiled with the sweetest benevolence, as one who would still my trepidation. "Has it come in yet?" he asked a passing youth. "Just," was the surprising answer. Then I gave a sigh of delicious relief. "Oh," I said, "I shall be so *glad* to have it." So it was brought, and I handed out a golden sovereign with the air of being quite ready to pay twice that and more. And I saw an elderly gentleman trying to repress rather nice smiles. I think he was wishing that *he* had written a book, ladies—in such frocks and hats—hurled themselves into shops to demand, and bore away pressed to their tender sides.

But this letter is not really to tell you this, which I could have related at lunch on Sunday—it was to ask you if you can come to a Spontaneous Dinner Party at eight next Friday. Mr. Burlingame of Scribner's is here just for a few days on his way to Paris with his daughter. And as he is a charming man, I want him to dine at my house with two or three people who are almost as interesting as I am. As he is here for such a short time, I must snatch at people as it were. There is no leisure for formalities, you can even say "Yes or "No" by telegram. I hope it will be "Yes."

Yours Sincerely,

FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT.

Though she was not actually engaged upon a book, her mind held several, in suspension, so to speak, besides "De Willoughby." She was still thinking that she could finish "His Friend," the book about Lionel, and "In a Fair, Far Country"—and there was the one about the cellars of the Portland Place house hovering about. She refers to the first two in a letter to Zangwill, who was aiding her in a search

for a country or seaside place, and had suggested Haslemere. Mrs. Burnett writes:

63 Portland Place, W.,
Friday.

DEAR MR. ZANGWILL:

Miss Williamson and I will be at Waterloo Station to meet at nine sharp. We will "House at 8.30 sharp." Then after Waterloo we will plunge into the wilds of Haslemere. It seems only human that one should want to go and stay in a place with a name like that. But it seemed so nice that I thought it must be rather like Heaven and you couldn't get there unless you had done something to deserve it. In any case, however, I am going with you tomorrow. Perhaps that is the reason it is becoming gradually cloudy. It will probably rain, but I shall go whether it does or not. . . .

I want to go and plunge into fastnesses and write a book which has been clamouring at me for four years. I care about that book. If I can say it as it is in me, it will be good to have done it. And it leads me on to another which has been groaning for four years also. I wonder if you would understand it. I should *think* you would, but also I might find out you wouldn't. Of course, I have not seen you often enough yet to have found out very much about you, have I? But I found out one thing in the Chamber of Horrors, which was that you are kind and that that Beaconsfield brain of yours is not too brilliant to see—No—is brilliant enough to see a human thing may be tuned by Nature in a queer tense way without being quite a fool and to be despised from lofty heights. *Pour moi*, I am quite sure nothing human is to be despised. It is all a matter of the stringing.

She went to Haslemere, and while staying at a house she had taken temporarily, she wrote to Kitty:

Haslemere, Surrey.
August 7, 1894.

DARLING KITTY:

. . . Beatrice Herford is my most cherished dear. If she misses a Wednesday I feel myself injured. Has Oliver [Herford] told you about her monologues she makes and recites? If he has not, he ought to blush. I never saw any thing cleverer in my life. There is one she does which represents a shop girl at Jordan and Marshes—attending to her customers in annoyed intervals of conversation with a companion behind the counter. It is the shop girl who speaks, and from her remarks and exclamations and gestures and sniffs you gather what all the other people say—the other girl telling her beau's compliments—the customer, who is being taught her place as intruder—the child who comes to buy something—the drummer she has had a passing flirt with—the cash boy who is slow, and all the rest. It is a piece of genuine art. She has a career before her, I am sure. And she is such a dear, genuine, simple, sweet thing. And how she adores Oliver! How they all adore Oliver! It is simply disgraceful. Tell him I say so. He has no right to be adored to that extent.

I wonder if Daisy remembered to greet him as I said she must. Her very *first* word was to be "Beast!!"—and then, when he looked startled, she was to tell him that was from Fluffy.

. . . I must tell you of one thing we did. Have you heard about the Keats Memorial placed in Hampstead church by Americans? We went to the ceremonies. There was first a lunch at Walter Besant's, with so many interesting people—Gosse, Du Maurier, Theodore Watts, beautiful young Lord Houghton, who is Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and the most charming, modest, lovable young giant with a sweet face and large, lovely eyes, Sydney Colvin, Dykes Campbell, and several others. At the church there was

every literary and artistic lion in London, from Sara Grand and Aubrey Beardsley to—to Fluffy. A Mr. Day made an address for the Americans, presenting the bust, and Edmund Gosse one accepting it. Lord Houghton won my heart for aye by the lovely and clever young modesty with which he spoke—as his father's son—then there were other addresses and then the bust was uncovered, and the Gosse children went and hung laurels round it. Remembering what one does of that poor boy's bitter sadness and pain, it was rather heartbreaking. Think how they disdained him once in Hampstead. Zangwill and I went up together to look at it afterwards. "And the irony of it!" he said, "the irony of it. Just as they did to him then they would do to another today, who had his genius."

Zangwill interests me very much. Do you know his "Ghetto Tragedies?" Are you reading "The Master," and do you ever see his brilliant causeries "Without Prejudice" in the *Pall Mall Gazette?* They are so well worth reading, and he talks as well as he writes. "It takes so much time to earn one's living, that one has no time to *live*," he said the day we came to Haslemere together. Could there be anything much better?

Oliver Herford, Mrs. Burnett had come to know and love in the Hall home at Boston, where he was a quite constant visitor; Beatrice, who lived in England with her father, the Reverend Brooke Herford, and other sisters, was brought to the Portland Place house by Daisy Hall, and immediately became a loved and indispensable person. She later throve as a monologist both in America and England.

With these many stories all a-borning, The Imp was unwilling to leave Mrs. Burnett in peace to do the work. The following letter tells its own tragic story:

63 Portland Place, W.,
Sunday.

DEAR MR. ZANGWILL:

You will be surprised to hear from me from Portland Place. I did not expect to be here. One of the horrible, strange things of Life has happened. On Thursday morning I secured that lovely Fernhurst Vicarage until October, and in the afternoon I received a cable from Washington saying that my boy Vivian had returned from the seaside with typhoid fever. I left Haslemere the next morning, and I sail for New York on Wednesday on the *Britannic* of the White Star Line. Five years ago I went home at a day's notice from Rome—to take care of my other boy. There is a resemblance in the two voyages that makes me shudder. Vivian has just passed triumphantly his examinations for Harvard—without a "condition." He is a lovely, lovable boy, and has been a lovable creature all his life. If he goes out of this world as his brother did, then there will be two of them who will have passed without a condition. One must be glad for them at least.

I did not want to go away without a word to you. I had hoped you would have come to pay us a visit at Fernhurst Vicarage. I leave you good and kind wishes.

Yours sincerely,

FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT.

She arrived in Vivian's room with the smile she had learned so well to force during the heartrending days at Lionel's bedside. Fortunately things were different. The crisis was passed; all that was needed was good nursing and careful nourishment.

By college opening, Vivian was on his feet, and after a few weeks the doctors told her he might consider going to Cambridge. She was granted an interview by the benign President Eliot, whose kindly heart sensed her troubled

spirit. He welcomed her boy genially to the "classic shades" and told him that nothing would be expected of him the first year, except to get perfectly well; so she was able to leave for England late in November, with her mind at ease and the skies seemingly clear.

Yet there had been no real writing done for several seasons, and even a year without a big book, with her meant drawing upon principal. There was rather unexpected work in the air, however. The World's Fair (Columbian Exposition) at Chicago had been held in 1893–94, and at its close several important Chicago writers launched a plan for a "World's Fair Book," which should in some measure perpetuate the great event in "song and story." Eugene Field was one of the group, and he, evidently through a Mr. William J. Knox, a journalistic associate, opened negotiations as shown in the following letter:

1033 Evanston Avenue,
Station X, Chicago, Illinois.
October 22, 1894.

DEAR MRS. BURNETT:

I had a talk with Mr. Knox today and he agrees with me that it would be unfair to expect you to engage upon any story in which you did not feel an enthusiastic interest. You must not be hampered and you shall not be. That point is settled at the start. If you do the story for the book, you do it your own way, and the pictures will be made to fit your story. Mr. Knox will write you explicitly upon the matter and we both want you to feel that you are at liberty to treat your subject with the utmost freedom.

. . . I am sorry that my chirography has betrayed me. I could not forbear sending you a message of encouragement [an anonymous communication] when I heard of your trouble; for I have been very grievously afflicted, myself, and thrice have I gone down to the Valley with dear little

ones. Your beloved son will live to be a solace and a pride to you; I am sure of it.

Now do get the little story out of your head upon paper; it is going to be charming. You could not be dull or unfelicitous, even though you tried to be. You will be glad to hear that Riley is going to do some of the lyrics for us.

. . . Dear Mrs. Burnett, I am

Yours sincerely,

EUGENE FIELD.

Mrs. Burnett did have a characteristic idea, and it was to give a picture of the feelings of two simple American children, a girl and a boy, who had the privilege of going to the Fair. The story named itself "Two Little Pilgrims' Progress," and completely outgrew itself, becoming a quite good-sized book. This was the work that was occupying her during the first few months of 1895 in the Portland Place house.

"The One I Knew the Best of All" had just the year before appeared in book form, and "Two Days in the Life of Piccino" was appearing in one of the monthlies. That other of the beloved Mid-West American writers, James Whitcomb Riley, chose just this time to send to her a charming tribute, anent these two stories:

January 7, 1895.

DEAR MRS. BURNETT:

The one you knew best of all is now known by me indeed; though even before reading this last delightful book I felt certain that she *must* have been just such a bewilderingly, bewitched, capricious, unforecastable, charming-in-spite-of-all Child!—and there's as near as I can untangle the perplexingly lovely impression I still have of her. Again, and over and over I thank you for the enduring pleasure the book will be to me. No less am I liking your new story,

and yearning for its continuation—like 'fore all at once it falled out o' my mind and *broked* itsse'f!

As to your kindly invitation to your home, either here or in London, be assured of my appreciation of so great a privilege as you accord. Once, in Washington, our friend, Charles Warren Stoddard, said I might call with him upon you, but I someway hadn't the courage to venture, fearing that just then you might be shaping some beautiful story into life which mustn't be jostled against. Now, however, I shall not hesitate—even though I *know* you're at work.

With all best greetings to you and yours, I am

Most gratefully and truly your friend,

James Whitcomb Riley.

CHAPTER XXII

THE SUCCESS OF AN UNCONVENTIONAL LADY

The "Two Little Pilgrims' Progress" was finished in fairly quick time—and then the big story that had been germinating came to light. She wrote to Vivian:

". . . This week I have been doing one of the most interesting things I ever began. It is a story of the Spectator and Tattler times and is related exactly in the style of Richard Steel when he wrote in the character of Mr. Isaac Bickerstaff. I find I can imitate it so easily and the story is so exciting. It is called

A LADY OF QUALITY

(BEING A MOST CURIOUS, HITHERTO UNKNOWN HISTORY, RELATED BY MR. ISAAC BICKERSTAFF, BUT NOT PRESENTED TO THE WORLD OF FASHION THROUGH THE PAGES OF 'THE TATLER')

"It is the story of the grand lady who killed her lover and hid him in the farthest wine cellar in Portland Place, and she is a wonderful creature. Born in 1650, the daughter of a roystering, drinking, hunting gentleman of Quality, and brought up among his dogs and grooms and boon companions in a way that is the scandal of the country, but which makes such a picturesque story and explains in a way all she does later. She is a beautiful virago, renowned for her splendid build and strength and nerves of steel and will of iron."

This book absorbed her more than any other she had ever

written. She found time, nevertheless, to be interested in the work of others. Her friendship for Henry James had been steadily growing, and her admiration for him as a writer, and likewise as a man. He was at this time preparing to put on his play, "Guy Domville," and Mrs. Burnett knew what the ordeal might especially be to a person of Mr. James' sensitive temperament. And so she conceived the plan—a "fairy story"—of going with him to Manchester, where the trial performance was to be given. He replied to her suggestion in truly Jamesian fashion:

34 De Vere Gardens, W.,
Tuesday.

DEAR MRS. BURNETT:

Your plan of going to Manchester is so wonderfully gracious that I shrink from administering the last little *douche* of cold water, and yet, I rather quake, too, at the responsibility of encouraging your friendly presence; the whole thing being, as yet, on so provincial a basis.

The play is, or has been, to be given at the Theatre Royal, on Friday next—but a slight uncertainty has been begotten by the falling ill last week of Mrs. Compton and the young man who does Valentine—victims of grave influenza. I expected to hear from Compton this A.M. definitely whether they are better—as *he* is not ill—and the performance is practicable. I haven't done so, but I shall do so tonight or tomorrow morning. I will then immediately let you know the prospect—but even if it is rose coloured—I shall be deprecatory as well as flattered; shall represent to you that Manchester is far and hideous; that the journey is long and fatiguing; the play is only *provisionally* cast, and that—with a thousand thanks to you—I find I shall have to sup with the Comptons in order to take the only available time to discuss some essential. . . .

. . . But if you *do* come—with your formidable backers—

I shall feel honoured and exalted and truly *tested*. It will be the Great Public. I will let you know definitely. . . .
(This letter is damaged).

Another letter from him might be joined to this, as belonging probably to the same time.

34 De Vere Gardens, W.
Monday.

DEAR MRS. BURNETT:

How amiable and charming your letter—and how full of your grace and your genius! I seize the chance you are so good to give me and will come with great pleasure on Wednesday at 6—at 6 because at that hour you may be less hedged about and encompassed than at 4 or 5. Then I will confess to you that I have indeed worked out with ceaseless toil the problem of being as much as possible the *other* bucket (in the well). Strategy, diplomacy, elaborate artifice are indeed my inspirers. But see with what success I arrange just to catch you—in this calmer hour!

I feel so the prince of manœuverers—and the prince of spellers to be able to say so.

You must tell me all about your hovel—and I'll tell you of my palace—in Venice. In short, I shall stay *at least* till 7.

Yours most truly,

MACHIAVELLI H. JAMES.

A letter she wrote to Kitty, dated February 3, 1895, shows how her solicitude for James was justified by events; and how deeply his dramatic misfortune hurt her:

". . . I am so heart-aching for Henry James. His play, "Guy Domville," began by being so picturesque and high-minded—and the stage setting was beautiful. . . . The second act weakened somehow, and the third was so without emotion that it made one annoyed. But it did not de-

serve the horrible, brutal reception it met with the first night.

"On Wednesday I lunched at Lady Dorothy Nevill's. Bret Harte was there, and Forbes-Robertson, and Sir Edwin Arnold, and the Boughtons [George H. Boughton, the artist]. The Boughtons had been at the first night, and Mr. Boughton said it was awful—that the pit and gallery 'booed' poor James after they called him out, and that he stood, looking like a man who had steeled himself to anything that might happen.

"It kills me to think of it because I feel it in my soul that he is secretly the most sensitive creature, and that from that hour he has been bleeding at every pore. I don't know what to do. I am racking my brain to think if there is anything deeply tactful and clever and *exactly* right that one could say to him when one sees him. It would have to come from the deepest and clearest of one's soul, and the highest and finest of one's grain. It would have to *mean* things, without saying them. It would have to be exquisitely clever, and seem quite simple. I could pray for it to be given me. Ah, such a wound—such a wound."

"A Lady of Quality" had started to be merely a short story, a brief novelette at the utmost. A letter to Lizzie Johnson Elliott, her old-time Washington friend, says:

". . . It is Sunday morning and I have just come down and am going out later to the Felix Moscheles' for lunch and I 'seize this moment' (as they used to in ancient epistolary days) to say a few words to you because if I do not, I know another week will go before I can write a line. This is because the 'Lady of Quality' is so absorbing me that she keeps me at my desk all day. She is such an amazing creature now she has begun her Adventures, that I am rather in awe of her.

"From what hitherto closed chamber in my brain such a fierce and lawless lady came, I cannot imagine! She sweeps me along like a tornado, however, and I enjoy the sensation. I wonder what form the astonishment she will create will take. She lives above all laws with a power and a majesty belonging only to herself. . . ."

It was in the Moscheles' home that Mendelssohn spent so much time.

There was other evidence that the year promised to be an exciting one. In a letter to Vivian she relates one of the first vivid incidents:

April 4, 1895.

DEAREST BOY:

What do you suppose I am involved in now? Another Fauntleroy fight. Two men in Paris, Schurman and de la Neuville, have made a play of the story and it has been put on by Bertin of La Comedie Parisienne with a success that seems enormous. The Paris papers are full of it, and right into the fray I have had to plunge once more. If I should not defend my rights it might mean the loss of another decent fortune because a great success in Paris means a success in all the continental cities.

. . . But for Edmund Gosse I might never have heard of it. He was of my theatre party, and when he came into the box he began at once, "Dear Mrs. Burnett, do let me congratulate you on your enormous success in Paris." I knew nothing whatever of it until that moment. The play is called "Le Petit Lord" and papers will record the names of the authors as MM. Shurman, Lemaire and Burnett. Why Lemaire I do not know, as Bertin calls the second man "de la Neuville."

And in a later letter she filled in the details:

". . . Stephen returned from Paris, having seen the

managers and several others. What he discovered is that there is in Paris a sort of boycotting of English authors and that without connecting themselves with some Frenchman who is in the ring they cannot get a piece played.

"It was Grein [J. T. Grein, Dutch dramatic critic] who made the arrangement for the production. Years ago, when Miss Marbury failed to place the piece, Grein got a production in Holland and I authorized him to try elsewhere on the Continent. All this time he has done nothing and I had forgotten his existence almost. His making these arrangements without consulting me in any way was most improper, but it may result in *some* money. . . ."

She was gathering her friends about her, and getting again in touch with her charities. In regard to St. Monica's she wrote, as a sort of testimonial, and for her friend Owen Lankester's use:

"I have been making one of my visits to St. Monica's and my heart is full of it, as it always is after such a visit. How I wish I were a very rich woman that I might help it as I should like to! I can scarcely tell you what I feel about that pretty place and the poor little souls who are so loved and cared for there. I think that each one who goes there, on wakening up the morning after arrival, must feel that he or she has opened eyes in a kind of fairyland. It is all so sweet and fresh and full of the atmosphere of a dear, homelike nursery where children are happy and loved and watched over, instead of being neglected and poor and in pain.

"I wish I had more time to spend in the little place, and as much money as I want to give it. It is such a good thing and such a kind thing and so grievously needed."

Beatrice Herford was mentioned in a previous letter.

The following, in a letter to Kitty, shows how interested Mrs. Burnett was in helping her get a professional start:

London, April 12, 1895.

DARLING KITTY:

. . . Dear Bee! We do so like to be together, but Fate was against us. Wasn't it uncanny? I don't feel lonely when I have her. She has scarcely been to me at all lately, because she is deep in her preparations for an Invitation Recital she is going to give, advised by Mr. Archer [the dramatic critic]. They think it will introduce her to the public. I have given her some names and sent a whole lot of little notes to people in forwarding her cards of invitation, but I am afraid she has chosen an unfortunate time. People are out of town so much.

These paragraphs from letters to Vivian give a sort of bird's-eye view of the social side of her life during these days:

"Last week I wanted to tell you of an evening with Felix Moscheles, the artist, spent with me, reading an article which he thinks of letting the *Harper's* have. He was in Paris and Munich or some other place like it—a fellow student of Du Maurier's in the Trilby days. It was at the time Du Maurier became interested in hypnotism, and they knew the same people and tried the same experiments. The article is called 'Du Maurier—and Others' at present, but he is not quite decided about the title. It is full of interesting material.

". . . Moscheles was a great friend of Browning's, and when he wrote anything, used to take his articles to read them to him for criticism, and he asked if he might bring this one and read it to me. He has not written much for publication and is extremely modest about his work, but he

has so much material in this thing that I cannot see how—in the present Trilby condition of things—it can fail to interest."

March 14, 1895.

. . . I have not been doing anything special just recently. Oh, yes, I suppose it is a little special to take tea with a Royal Princess—which I did last week. It was the Duchess of Albany, who is the widow of the Queen's son, Prince Leopold. It appears that she is attending a course of lectures at the National Health Society—at Berness Street, you know—where Fay Lankester [Owen's sister] is presiding deity, and when Royalties come to visit she receives them and gives them tea in her sitting room. She has to entertain H. R. H. in this way each time she comes to a lecture, and last week she (H. R. H.) expressed a desire to meet me, so Fay invited me and I went and made my little curtsey to the dear woman and drank tea with her. I am always so sorry for Royalties . . . and as it is etiquette that one must wait until they speak . . . they are frequently quite touching.

Sunday, May, 1895.

. . . My tablet is full of engagements. I was at such a charming dinner at the Edmund Gosses on Friday. The Alma-Tademas, the Rider Haggards, Sir Redners and Lady Audrey Buller, the Crackanthorpes, Lady Dorothy Nevill, and some others were there. I am going now to dress for a lunch at the Boughtons (the artist Boughton) and tonight I dine with Mr. Laurence Sterne, who gives bachelor dinner parties at Park Side.

Her relationship with Zangwill was getting upon the basis of a very intimate exchange of thought and experience —usually, however, expressed with that quizzical gaiety which she seemed to use almost as a cloak or disguise, lest

what she put down in words seem too frank or revealing.

Here are letters that indicate the growing intellectual intimacy:

63 Portland Place, W.
Sunday.

DEAR MR. ZANGWILL:

Thank you very much for sending me the third volume of "Children of the Ghetto" so untimely spirited away by Archie [her nephew—Edith's elder boy, whom she had taken to England with her]. It would please you to know that I had to wait for it so long at Mudie's that I felt there was no prospect of regaining the lost treasure within a year. I want to know in which volume of yours I read that majestic story about the man who was dragged by the desperate husband to his dying wife's bedside to support her in the hour of death, and though her rituals were so wide apart, the Great Thing was so much the same that she thought her own prayers were being prayed. When I say "majestic" I know perfectly well that word I am using—and so do you—and you know why I use it and why I have no other—or you could never have written the story. I am learning, with horrible torture, that there are thousands of people who cannot understand any of the things that are like the *meaning* of that story; who cannot understand *anything*. And one may beat one's brains out against the dead wall of them and die raving mad, if one will let oneself, and hence those vivacious spirits the which you envy me. But you see far and much—and great things, I think—and one should give oneself a half-holiday and let off a few modest crackers when an understanding strays across one's path.

63 Portland Place, W.,

DEAR MR. ZANGWILL:

I do so want to read some more of that manuscript to you. I feel that the work will go better afterwards. In the little new book ["Two Little Pilgrims' Progress"] I am

sending you, one of my children says, "Everyone has something to give." The stimulus your work brings to mine is what you have to give me. It is rather a valuable gift. Can you find an evening soon when you can come in to dinner as you did last week? I do not want to be a selfish little beast and ask you for time which belongs to your own work. Don't come out of mere unselfish goodness when you ought to be at the plough, but if there is a free night let me know as soon as you can because I really want you—to spur me up.

Zangwill's reaction to her reading of passages from "A Lady of Quality" is shown in this letter:

24 Oxford Road, Kilburn, N. W.
Thursday.

DEAR MRS. BURNETT:

. . . Mistress Clorinda haunts me—it is a big conception. When you particularly want to gratify me by reading some more of her to me, perhaps you will do it over an afternoon cup of tea in my study, which has become bright and spring-like since you visited it. That sounds like a pretty compliment. . . .

There was something in this friendship with Zangwill that faintly suggested, in its confidences and its sense of trust in the quality of his judgment, the early phase of her friendship with Gilder. She has a sincere admiration for Zangwill's heart, as well as his mind:

63 Portland Place, W.,
Friday.

DEAR MR. ZANGWILL:

It was *nice* of you to send me that proof—and do you know how fascinating it is to do a *nice* thing? My maid

brought it up to me with my breakfast, which I take in bed under the fixed impression that it saves time and enables me to get to work earlier. Don't undeceive me if your principles are not the same.

. . . So far, I would rather read Clorinda to you than to anyone. You so see the meaning of her. Some afternoon I will bring her to tea with you, and also bear with me flowers smelling of Spring; yellow flowers and white ones and violets to set about the room while I read.

Tell me again the name of your play's theatre. It is all very well to put down the date, but I don't know the place.

She makes some real revelations in the following letter about Clorinda:

63 Portland Place, W.
Sunday.

GOOD HUNTING!

DEAR MR. ZANGWILL:

. . . Do you know what I have realized just within the last few days? Clorinda is not at all a new departure for me—notwithstanding a certain misleading gentleness of literary exterior I have hitherto presented to the world. "That Lass o' Lowrie's" was a Clorinda in disguise—so were Rachel Ffrench and Christian Murdoch in "Haworth's." So was Bertha Amory, who laughed and wore tinkling ornaments and brilliant symphonies in red when she was passing through the gates of hell—so was little Sara Crewe when she starved in her garret and was a princess disdaining speech. Oh, she is not a new departure. She represents what I have cared for most all my life—from the time I was eight years old and an insensate person in authority struck me across the upper part of my arm with a riding whip, and I lifted the frill of my short sleeve, and after regarding the livid cut on the soft flesh for a moment or so, looked

up at the person who had done it and laughed. It was a brief little laugh, and I suppose I must have looked like the devil. Clorinda, you observe, has been in the immediate vicinity for some years, and traces of her are sure to be detected in more places than one.

I hope you are in Florence by this time. This is tantamount to wishing you good fortune—to wish you in Florence when the Spring is coming in. . . .

There was a friendship, too, drawing her and Henry James closer together. She apparently had also read a little to him from the "Lady"—and may have invited him to hear more. Hence this letter from him:

34 De Vere Gardens, W.
Tuesday.

DEAR MRS. BURNETT:

You involve me in such opaline mists of wit and grace that I really can't grope my way through them to any stronghold of defense. So I give up my groping, give up defending, and simply stand and inhale the balmy shower.

I have come back from Ireland just in time to catch it, and I don't stir from London so long as such delightful flurries are abroad.

The kind of entertainment I like best is weak and lovely, lukewarm tea, administered, toward 6 o'clock or so, by the hand of genius—administered, of course, in Portland Place. Let me come for it on Friday next (say?) at 5.45?—that is, if Friday is not your "day." If it is, I'll only come on *mine*, and mine will be some other. I will come to nothing that anybody else does. It must be *all* for me. That's the difficulty—that on that system I can't eat a whole dinner. But I want to hear the rest of the female Highwayman?

Do grant the opportunity, dear Mrs. Burnett, always

HENRY JAMES.

And this letter evidently followed but shortly after:

34 De Vere Gardens, W.
Tuesday.

DEAR MRS. BURNETT:

Oh, it's wretched! I have French celebrities on my hands all day and on my mind all night, and the end is not yet. And I have this myriad-armed London into the bargain. It's very sad and bad and mad.

I haven't a pin-hole until after the 1st of June. I should be very glad to come then if you will ask me again—in your benevolence—and if you could genially give me the choice of a *couple* of days; for I have, for the 1st days of June, two or three other engagements in the air. Are you in town Whitmonday (3d)—? Would *that* evening do?—or even Whitsunday, 2d? Doubtless, however, for that interregnum, you take Archie fashionably away? I humbly crouch by my writing table. Continue to endear yourself to me by noble obstinacies, but vary them by still nobler perpetrations. As, for instance, on the 2d or 3d—or on some later day.

So far from finding the Lady of Quality "visionary"—I see her better than if *I* had made her. And what is better still, she sees me. She winks at me—distinctly. There—she has done it again! Don't whisk her away and slap her—and don't slap, either,

Yours very constantly,
HENRY JAMES.

P. S. I continue to take the liveliest interest in Archie.

A little later in the season she invited him to a dinner party, and told him at the same time probably that she was looking for a house as usual, in which to spend the holiday months—and asked him to help in his neighborhood:

Point Hill, Playden, Sussex.
Wednesday.

DEAR MRS. BURNETT:

What is a gentleman to say gracefully to a graceful lady when she invites him to a graceful party in the ungraceful London at a time when he *can't* perjure his immortal soul by saying that he is sorry to be far from it. I don't mean from the party—but from the place. Your ingenuity ought to be up to this—mine isn't. It is only up to keeping me in the ovine, bovine, asinine retreat to which weeks ago—discouraged of knocking again and again at your inexorable door, where caretakers were monosyllabic, I betook myself—in my misanthropy.

I only want you to know that if, on the 25th, I don't encumber your staircase, it will be because I'm a hermit in a hermitage.

I'm away from London until November 1st. It succeeds beautifully—may your party create (in your own breast) but ½ the furore.

I see you too little—but a lady of your quality soars aloft—among the stars. Really, if you *should* care for the hallow of the next tree to me, I could secure it, I think—and at a reasonable rate.

Please don't leave town as soon as I come back. Believe me,

Most faithfully yours,

HENRY JAMES.

No letters from her to James have been preserved. More's the pity, since they would certainly have represented her at her epistolary best, and have had in them a sincere note of affection and appreciation.

Mrs. Burnett was, according to her custom, seeing much of the theatre. She was particularly interested in the production of Pinero's new play, "The Notorious Mrs. Ebb-

smith," with Mrs. Patrick Campbell in the title rôle. She wrote her impressions of it to Vivian:

March 29, 1895.

My Dearest:

This letter ought to have been written on last Sunday but I postponed it for "Mrs. Ebbsmith's" sake, and this is the first moment I have had in which I could reach it. But I am not a faithless mother; I am only a very hard working one.

I had my theatre party and it was quite delightful. Mr. and Mrs. Edmund Gosse, Miss Hepworth-Dixon, Erroll [Sherson] and I were in the box—at supper afterwards we had in addition Mr. Zangwill, Ella Hepworth-Dixon and Archie.

I am rather puzzled as to how to describe the play—in fact, it is such a bold and curious complication of merits and failure to reach an aim—or of *lack* of aim—that it is not to be described. It gave one the feeling that Pinero had been filled with a vaulting ambition to do something, but had not been in the least clear as to what he aimed at—and had not reached there, wheresoever it was. Question of sex, of course, but why or how or wherefore God forbid that I should endeavor to explain.

The interesting point is that as a play it is the most perfectly undramatic thing ever put on the stage. It is conservative (it has that merit) but no more dramatic than—than a pair of galoshes. The people come upon the stage and talk and talk.—They say some good things (it has *that* merit) and are quite clear cut studies of character (it has that merit, which is huge) but as to any conclusion being reached or any vista opened up—it certainly has not *that* merit.

And yet, the audience—a British audience—sat in rows and rows and listened and gazed—and we had to get out of

our carriage yards away from the entrance and walk through the rain to get in in time—there were so many carriages in line. And how is this? I will tell you.

Just now people want all sorts of questions dramatically settled on the stage, and "The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith" sounds well—*and* the woman who plays her—Mrs. Patrick Campbell, whom I have previously disliked and disbelieved in—is so desperately in earnest and so capable of expressing a feminine creature's bare soul, and is so intense and picturesque and convincing that she holds one from the first minute to the last. John Hare, as the Duke of St. Olphert's —is anything but perfect, to my mind—his grades of perfection only depend on his parts. Forbes-Robertson, as the weak, selfish, wavering egotist of a lover, painted a singular picture, and I think it must have been rather trying to him to realize that his merit and success depended on his forcing people to explain, "Oh, but you know, really now, *no* woman *could* have loved such a despicable ass."

The minor characters were very completely done, and an American, a Miss Eleanor Calhoun, was intensely fine in her one scene in the very last act. It was the *acting* that people watched, and which made many of them go away believing they were pleased with the play. But they were not; only the majority are not astute enough to find it out. . . . The "party" went home about two, or something after, but Zangwill remained until half past three. He is a journalist man, and, like an actor, knows not midnight hours. We talked about the "Lady of Quality" and he says I am writing the book of my life—that it is so virile that it is amazing. I, myself, cannot help feeling that it is a powerful thing.

With Eleanor Calhoun Mrs. Burnett had later considerable to do.

After seeing Irving in "King Arthur," she wrote to Vivian:

Tuesday,
February 5, 1895.

DEAR BOY:

I was thinking a few days ago that I ought to take subjects for my letters. I have not yet had time to get my letters from Lord Chesterfield to His Son to model myself upon, but I shall have it in a few days. The subject of this week's letters would be "The Theatres," but that it has been so freezing cold that I have only been to two plays. Still, they were both interesting and worth talking about.

One was Irving's "King Arthur"—or rather, Irving in Comyn Carr's "King Arthur" at the Lyceum, and the other was poor Henry James' deeply damned play of "Guy Domville" at the St. James. I think I saved the play bills of both to send to you. I believe I will save all my play bills and send them to you and you can put them in an album as Gigi does. I think it is rather a nice idea.—One has such a reliable theatrical record.

. . . The play has excellent lines in it and the setting was most perfect. There was a May blossoming wood scene which was enchanting. Guinevere and the ladies of her Court had a May day festival in the forest—and all the trees and bushes were loaded with white May and the troop of lovely ladies came bounding down a sloping shaded path with branches of May in their hands. It was exquisite. One expected to hear the birds burst into singing on every side.

The Great Hall at Camelot, and the Turret above the bridge at Camelot were beautiful and stately—but you know, after all, what Irving does in these days is more or less a kind of poetic, highly cultured and literary pantomime. It is so spectacular. Not on the whole that I think

we need complain, and for my part, I should not sigh particularly for the 'days of The Bells and The Lyons' Mail and The Corsican Brothers. They were perfect as melodrama—and these things are perfect as pictures of beautiful and poetic things.

The idea of a sort of Lady-Chesterfield-to-her-son-at-College correspondence quite caught Mrs. Burnett's fancy, and is evident, always with touches of humor and affection, throughout the whole series of letters received by Vivian during the four college years at Harvard.

After the death of Lionel, the passionate love she had had for her first-born quite simply and naturally transferred itself to her only child, and he became not only the prime object of her affections, but a Purpose. She began to have something of the feeling for him that an English family traditionally has for the first son—the Heir.

Early she discovered that his real daemon was music, although literature was naturally stencilled upon him by inheritance. Music it became, with great enthusiasm, all through college. And so Understanding wrote:

63 Portland Place,
February 2, 1895.

DEAREST BOY:

It is a lucky creature who has a voice. It gives him a medium for *expression* of himself that I believe all human beings crave for—at least all who have imagination. There are those of us who *must* talk or sing—or play—or act—or write. Don't you think it is so?

You don't know what a joy it is to me that all your interests are such dignified and beautiful things. I don't know how I should have borne it if you had been drawn by things coarser.

I am so happy in knowing you love that darling house-

hold [the Hall's] and that they love you. To be loved there is a liberal education for any man. Tell them all I adore them and the very next time you see the Lovely Lady Hall, drop gracefully on to one knee and kiss her hand, and say I told you to. . . .

Another letter, received early in the freshman year, reveals an understanding of herself, an understanding of her college boy, and an understanding of the understanding between them:

Sunday, March 3, 1895.

DEAREST BOY:

I have so many things I want to write to you and so little time to write them in that I have constantly to remind myself that "Human beings can do anything they set their minds to," or I should quite despair. My very best letters are those I have never had time to write. Time is a great problem of the Nineteenth Century, and will no doubt be a bigger one in the Twentieth.

. . . If I had not entire faith in your wits and also your taste, it would disturb me to hear that you are going about with "A fast set." I should know I could not prevent a boy —who is almost a man—doing what he decided he should find pleasure in, but I should privately feel that Fate had done you rather an ill turn. I should say, "'The curse has come upon him,' said the Lady of Shallot." Typhoid fever was a calamity, and this would seem rather like small-pox. It's nastier and leaves marks. You are a very nice looking boy now, with fine, bright eyes, and a fresh, clear skin, but if one has the small pox, one has it—*et c'est fini.*

But I am not disturbed because I have a very serene confidence in your taste, your wits and your manners. I pay myself the compliment of believing that my system was good and that as I never forgot it for a moment from the

time you were a day old until you were eighteen and more . . .

I suppose there scarcely ever was a woman who has "seen life" less than I have. I think my eyes have been set on the clouds too much, and their accommodation was not adapted to some things. Besides, whenever I caught a glimpse it hurt me too much. It gave me a pain in my heart and in my stomach. Nausea is a pain, isn't it? It was that taste of the "raw turnip" which I would not admit.

But this much I do know—that a man can't help seeing life, whether he goes out to seek it or not, and whether he hates it or likes it. A woman may, but a man cannot. The result all depends on the grade of his intellect and his point of view—whether he is epicure enough to be fastidious about the flavors of his existence, or whether he bolts tripe and onions and garlic sausage in huge lumps with gusto—not minding that they will make him odorous and that the most interesting and entertaining persons have an objection to the nearness of individuals with that aroma.

. . . I so want you to judge things for yourself that I do not even say, "*don't* go with the fast set." I merely draw your attention to the fact that gentlemen and thinkers will entertain you vastly more and will also be of more value to you in forming that career we both of us so look forward to and believe in. I want you to be an exceedingly well groomed man, both mentally and physically.

You are on the very brink of the world, my pet, you are not nineteen yet. You have not had time to become one of the world's halt and maimed and blind—you are quite alone in one sense and will be for some years. A man is always alone in that sense when he is in college. I commend you to God—and when I say GOD I don't mean that person in the Bible who curses people for fun—in mere exuberance of spirit, it generally seems to me—but a Power which is so

high and great that we cannot formulate it, we human things—but which is surely Somewhere and gave us a part of Himself in that thing which thinks for us. And also, "Not a sparrow falleth to the ground."

Always tell me all you want to tell me. (I should never ask you to tell me anything you *did not* want to tell me, because now is the time "When he decides.")—But I know you know I have the kind of intelligence which does not make things personal but tries to see the other person's point of view. I always tried to make you feel that my quality was *faithfulness*. I am your friend and you are always sure of me. If you told me a thing I did not understand, I would work at it until I did. I do not think there is one trivial thing in me. I should like to cut it out with a knife if I thought there were. I mean by that, that I am made of things—qualities—I believe people can stand by. Now, for the present, exit "fast set."

And in this comprehending way she followed him through his college days, endeavoring to be intelligently interested in every activity he took up.

CHAPTER XXIII

A PLAY ABOUT A GENTLEMAN, AND AN OLD BOOK

The country-house situation was solved that year (1895) by the taking of Broomfields, a house a bit like The Glade, in Surrey, near Frensham Pond and Moor, and not far from Hind Head.

She filled the house with a gay party. Vivian came shortly after college closed. Beatrice Herford was a permanent house guest, so was Constance Fletcher (George Fleming), writer and dramatist, who had recently written a successful play, "Mrs. Lessingham," with Mrs. Pat Campbell as the star. Zangwill was also of the group all the summer more or less, coming and going. He dropped this gay note after one of his visits:

24 Oxford Road, Kilburn, N. W.
Sunday, September 8, 1895.

DEAR CLORINDA:

The Bouchier play [The Chile Widow] went exactly as I expected—a success, but not *un succes fou.* It's sure to be a *succes d'estime:* it's chances depend largely on the verdict of the morning papers, one or two of which you will have seen ere this. I don't believe it will run *very* long.

. . . By the way, I find I mentioned "George Fleming" as one of the good lady novelists in that now notorious article in which I am supposed to have damned them *en bloc.* . . .

. . . You gave me a very good time at Broomfields, and Miss Fletcher was an unexpected treat. But I mustn't make

invidious distinctions, for everybody was charming to me. . . . May the play continue to evolve, and the collaborators to be friendly.

Yours always,
I. ZANGWILL.

The reference to the play and the collaborators was to Constance Fletcher and "The First Gentleman of Europe." Mrs. Burnett had in mind a play centring about the "Georges" and the days of the Beaux. Feeling that Constance Fletcher could be of assistance to her in working this idea out, she embarked with her upon a collaboration. The venture came to a successful conclusion, and the play was subsequently produced in America.

"A Lady of Quality" is one of the few of Mrs. Burnett's novels that was not serialized. Mrs. Burnett felt so much in need of money that she was glad to have it go directly into a book, and get the "advance" the publishers were ready to make on it. The story was, too, strong meat, and there may have been scruples in regard to it among conservative magazine editors.

Mrs. Burnett decided that she would spend the winter in London, particularly as she had seriously started on the dramatization of "A Lady of Quality," in which she expected that she would receive considerable help from Stephen. Although she was now making a substantial income, the standard of life which she had gradually adopted made the outgo quite terrific—so she felt in straitened circumstances, and obliged to get down to really remunerative work. Not the least anguishing feature of the situation was that she feared she might not be able to do all for her son in college that she had hoped. So, although a "Lady of Quality" play was on the docket, so to speak, there was a book she thought she could do before it. She wrote to Vivian:

". . . I have had DeWilloughby retyped and it has come home. Oh, my Viv, that is a powerful thing—and it is *full* of good work. The color of Delisleville, of Talbots Cross Roads, of Whitebriar Springs and of Willowfield is so excellent. It has enough astmosphere for five or six books and it is *made* of emotion and feeling. It must have been begun nearly fifteen years ago and I am actually proud of it. I may greatly alter the final plan of it, but let me once get into it again and things will happen. Won't it be delightful to produce it just after Clorinda? . . ."

"DeWilloughby," it will be remembered, was started before "Through One Administration," and had been pushed aside by the temporarily more gripping idea of that book. A later letter says:

". . . Mr. Zangwill has returned from his lecturing tour and dropped in to dinner a few days ago. I read him the first chapter—only the first—of Tom DeWilloughby. . . . I was pleased to see the story promised to be as 'all right' as Clorinda. When he shook hands with me he said in his odd way, 'I have great respect for you.' I care for his opinions of things. I care for all his thoughts and I believe in his mind enormously. If he respected a piece of work I should feel very reposeful about it. He is the only person I know at all intimately at present who fills that niche for me.

". . . The Vagabonds Club (it is a big club of writing men) gives me a dinner on the 9th of December. Their envoy came to me yesterday. I am to be the *fêted* lady because they have decided in solemn conclave that I am 'the Woman of the Moment.' It is very flattering, but it makes me feel rather shy. They say it is apropos of the new book—but though I know it is a fine little book, I don't feel as if it was big enough to entitle me to be the Woman of the

Moment. I shall be the Woman of several moments when Clorinda and DeWilloughby are in the world, but just now I blush under the burden of such honors."

It can be said, in all justice, that however gaily she might praise her own personal or mental attractions to make her letters amusing, Mrs. Burnett, though perhaps a "Fluffy" in some of her mental phases, had always, *au fond*, a just estimate of her abilities and her attractions, underestimating them rather than otherwise. The last paragraph of the letter above quoted gives a truly accurate expression of her point of view. Throughout her life she had a certain shyness and diffidence which made her loath to reach out after people. She was always glad to have them wish to seek her out, and made the most of her abilities and charms when they did come to her.

Her social life of these years did, however, bring her into contact, more or less permanent and intimate, with London's interesting people, and her Wednesday afternoons gathered groups of the most brilliant conversationalists and writers under her roof.

Among the papers preserved by her from this period, because she thought they might have autograph-collectors' value to Vivian, are many brief notes signed by such people as Lady Dorothy Stanley; Frank Dicksee, R. A., President of the Royal Academy; Elizabeth Robins, the actress; Mrs. F. S. Lowndes (wife of Hilaire Belloc); Martin Morris; Blanche Ludwig; Mary St. Leger Harrison, wife of the editor of the *Times;* Mary Clifford; Carolyn Phillips; Isabel A. Margerson; Mrs. A. E. M. Wynford; Richard Pryor; Beerbohm Tree, the actor; Arabella Rosetti; Anstey Guthrie; Nora Phillips (wife of the poet, Stephen Phillips), whose names do not happen to be mentioned in the portions of letters to or from Mrs. Burnett quoted. These

notes as a rule indicate that their writers were guests from time to time at Mrs. Burnett's house, and something more than mere acquaintances, if not to be ranked as intimates, as, for example, the following one from Mrs. Humphry Ward:

26 Grosvenor Place, S.,
November 28.

Dear Mrs. Hodgson Burnett:

If we are fortunate enough to find you still free, will you give us the pleasure of your company at dinner on Monday, December 9th, at eight o'clock? It will be quite a small party—Mr. and Mrs. DuMaurier and a few other friends—and it would be delightful if you could join us.

I wonder whether, if I were to send you a little bound copy of "Bessie Costrell" that I have by me, you would send me in exchange a copy of "Louisiana"? I have always had a great affection for that story.

Believe me,

Yours sincerely,

Mary A. Ward.

Forgive me for writing by my daughter's hand. My own is a perpetual trouble.

Mrs. Burnett and Mrs. Humphry Ward were warm admirers of each other's work, though they did not see a great deal of each other. Other letters indicate that Mrs. Ward herself had a considerable struggle with malaise, which prevented her seeing as much of her literary friends as she wished.

The Vagabonds' dinner promised a really new and rather frightening experience to her, the making of a real speech, in the rôle of the woman who had written the "book of the hour." Her relief at having it all over, and her jubilation at finding she could make an "address" if she had to, are reflected in the following:

63 Portland Place, W.,
December 13, 1895.

DEAREST VIVIAN BOY:

I will conceal it from you no longer! It would be useless to endeavor to do so, when four hundred people have declared the truth with acclamations.—The only mother that ever you had is—an Orator!!!!! It is too deliciously funny for words when you consider my years and years of perfect conviction that any attempt on my part to lift my voice in public would result in convulsions and death—and I find myself rising and addressing four hundred people in the most difficult banqueting hall in London, and no one throws anything whatever at me and, in fact, I am quite stunned and bewildered by being informed that I have made the success of my life.

The peacock, vanity, which has inflated and made me utterly unbearable ever since! To do a thing you *can* do—such as write a book—what is that? But to do a thing you can't do, and find yourself called a brilliant thing, is really worth while.

I was *so* miserable for three weeks before that dinner, I had to be kept up with restoratives. . . .

Zangwill sat on my right hand and during the third or fourth course I said to him, "I have stopped being frightened. I have begun to grow impudent." When I had finished speaking he turned and took my hands in both his and said, "It was perfect. It couldn't have been better." [Jerome K.] Jerome came to me and said, "I would give a great deal to be able to make such a speech as that."

I send you the Queen, in which it is recorded. You will see that it is a very mild little speech.—Its success lay in the fact that I was not at all frightened or hesitating, and that my voice was clear and carried well. When I said the earnest thing I said it as I say such things to you. I do not

burn to rush upon the platform, but I should never be afraid again. . . .

The little speech to the Vagabonds:

Mrs. Burnett, in reply, said:

"The state of abject terror in which I rise to endeavour to express my sense of your kindness would, I am sure—if you could measure its heights and depths—render me an object of the tenderest commiseration to you. When Mr. Douglas Sladen came to convey to me your kind invitation, I think I turned pale. I said to him, 'My dear Mr. Sladen, but I am a totally unworthy object. Dinner parties should be given to illustrious ladies who are able to "rise to reply" when beautiful remarks are made to them. I could not. I am incapable. I could not totter to my feet and utter ten consecutive words. I should burst into floods of tears and retire ignominiously under the table.' Whereupon—with that infinite subtlety which is ever the weapon of the Viper Man—he began to flatter me. He artfully suggested all sorts of agreeable specious things—he even intimated that the Vagabond Club wanted to give a dinner to me—not to an illustrious lady. Upon which I became so pleased with myself, and so inflated, that I coyly succumbed. At the present moment I am torn between two emotions—one is the hope that I shall be able to make you hear me; the other the fear that it might be better for me, and for you, if I could not. If my voice does not reach you at all, you will perhaps be so very amiable as to be deluded into thinking I may have said something comparatively intelligent, and no remark of mine will undeceive you. I would not intentionally undeceive you for worlds and worlds, and untold gold, or any of those bribes one is supposably offered as an inducement to do, or not to do, things, and which one always rejects with such scorn. From my earliest infancy—

and that is not an affair of yesterday, or the day before either—I have always hoped to be spared three things—I hoped I should never be hanged, I hoped I should never be drowned, and I hoped I should never be obliged to make a speech. Now I confess—I conceal nothing, I make a clean breast of it—neither of the first two things have ever happened to me. If a play were written about my 'past' tomorrow, the curtain would not fall upon either of those situations; but, if I go on in this manner much longer, I may not escape the third. I might make a speech; but, notwithstanding the gloom of this prognostication, let us cheer up a little. I may not, if I am cautious, and you do not encourage me too much. The fact remains that it is absolutely impossible for me to address an audience; I never did it in my life, I never shall. Consequently, *me voilà!* Now, I feel there is a possibility—a grave possibility—of your saying that this method of stating the case is feminine and illogical. It is; that is why I said it. I have not the slightest objection to being either illogical or feminine. To be either is amusing and interesting in moments of idle leisure. In answer to the reference to a general indefiniteness of opinion as to the country of my birth, and the doubts as to whether I am an Englishwoman or an American, I can only say that I do not wonder that such doubts exist. They have at times existed in my own mind. The truth is, however, that I was born in England—all my people were English—even to the third and fourth generation—but I have been the mother of two American sons. That seems to give a country a sort of claim upon a woman, doesn't it? And it seems, too, to give the woman a sort of claim in the Halls of Congress, but if I did it would be a large one. So, perhaps, it might be said that by my own birth I am an Englishwoman, but by the birth of my two boys I am an American. Seriously, what I should like to

be able to say well to you is a very simple and real thing. Brilliant phrasing could not make it more real, though it might add to its beauty of form. I want to say that I thank you very much. The beings who are workers know it—the happiest thing in the world is to feel that, after all, one's work was worthy of the doing. It is a very close and dear thing, this work one is born to do. It is never quite like one's dreams of it, but one does hope so that it will never quite dishonour one. Sometimes I think it seems like a river sweeping between the banks of one's life, and bearing to the great sea the things the passers-by cast to it—beautiful things, ugly ones, sadnesses, dreams, tragedies. Sometimes it is full and at high-water mark, sometimes it runs low; but even when there is only a poor little stream rippling over the stones, one does want its water to be clear, and always respects and loves it. So when you seem to tell me that my river has sometimes been at full tide, and has borne some burdens worth the bearing to the great sea—I am grateful to Fate—I am grateful to you—and I thank you very much indeed. Not a little—but very much indeed."

The account of the event given in *The Queen* states, with great politeness at least:

"Mrs. Burnett, who is an orator born, though she has not previously made any speeches, was listened to with the most eager attention, and, at the close of her speech, was greeted with prolonged cheering."

CHAPTER XXIV

THE "LADY" ON THE STAGE

In that letter of December 13 about the little speech were also paragraphs telling of an approaching visit:

". . . Tomorrow morning I am going to Yorkshire. I must have told you in the last letter that I was going to be one of a house party at Fryston Hall, the Earl of Crewe's place—or rather, one of his places. Fryston was his when he was Lord Houghton. I suppose Crewe Hall, in Cheshire, is his also, now he is Earl of Crewe. The last Crewe was only a baron. Lord Houghton was made *Earl* of Crewe because he assumed the Lord Lieutenantship of Ireland when the political outlook was so difficult, and nobody wanted to go.

"Henry James visited him at Dublin Castle last season, and he said the position was trying enough. The better class of people almost boycotted the poor, beautiful, heroic young man. But he seems to have been very fine and borne himself perfectly. He did such practical, generous things, that one hears that the poor people quite adore his name. I particularly admired the practical goodness of his supplying the people with new potato tubers because their crops were worn out things.

"Brains—dear Vivian Boy—and heart combined. Oh! those two things. What they may accomplish when they are harnessed together. Brains flying about without heart may do all sorts of mischief—so may hearts,—poor dears—flying about without brains,—but brains *and* hearts com-

bined in each human being would leave no wrong unrighted, no mistake unrectified, no reasonableness untaught, and would be a by no means despicable substitute for a merciful God."

This visit marked the real beginning of an important later life friendship—that with the Earl of Crewe. Shortly after she wrote Vivian more fully:

Fryston Hall,
Ferrybridge, Yorkshire.

DEAR VIVIAN BOY:

. . . I came to Fryston last Monday. Bret Harte and a very interesting Miss Sichell came from London by the same train, but we did not see each other until we got into the landau at Ferrybridge station.

Until Wednesday the party consisted of Miss Sichell, Mrs. Henniker (Lord Crewe's sister), Bret Harte, Mr. Guide (Lord Crewe's Secretary), and myself. On Wednesday Mayor Henniker came from Scotland and Mr. Paul from London, and on Thursday the O'Connors. T. P. O'Connor, you know, is the Irish member of Parliament, and the Weekly News magnate. He is delightfully vivid and interesting, speaks with a delicious brogue, and has an exceedingly pretty American wife.

Fryston is a big, substantial, lovable house in the midst of a park. The pictures are really very beautiful. In the days of our great, great grandmothers, were people vainer than they are today—were portraits and miniatures cheaper—or were relatives more loving? One sees the same beauty again and again—by Romney—by Cosway—by somebody else. . . .

Your own,

MAMMY.

How deeply she was stimulated by the atmosphere in which she found herself, shows in this letter to Kitty:

63 Portland Place, W.,
January 2, 1896.

MINE KITTY:

. . . He is the most beautiful Earl in England, and I have been staying at one of his country houses—Fryston Hall, in Yorkshire. He is the Earl of Crewe, and he was Lord Houghton until a short time ago. The Lord Houghton who was his father was the celebrated Richard Monckton Milnes, who was said to be the most agreeable man in London, and knew all the geniuses. It is told that Carlyle once said, "If Jesus Christ came to London, no one would take the slightest notice of him.—Oh, yes, Richard Monckton Milnes would invite him to breakfast."

At a time when things were very trying in Ireland, *my* Lord Houghton went to Dublin Castle, as Lord Lieutenant, you know, and as a mark of appreciation of his services, the barony of Crewe to which he succeeded, was made an earldom. I met him first at a lunch at the Besants, at the time of the Keats unveiling at Hampstead. There is something which to me is so curiously attractive about him. It is not that he is tall and graceful and has a beautifully cut face and lovely eyes—it is something else—a sort of touching beautifulness in *himself*—something which makes you feel tender to him. You *know* that he is exquisite and lovable and perfect natured, and of finer clay than the rest of the world.

. . . A little poem in his volume of Stray Verses makes me think that the look means he has suffered a great deal.

He married, when he was quite young, Sybil Maria, daughter of Sir Frederick Ulric Graham, and she died seven years after. Lady Fitzgerald, her sister, says they were radiantly happy and inseparable. The poem I speak of is called "Seven Years," and I know what it means. In the drawing room at Fryston there is a picture of a pretty,

slender girl in a white frock, and beneath it is written, "Sybil 1887"—that was the year she died. I believe his eyes are always looking for her and thinking of her.

At Fryston there are Romneys and Cosways and Joshua Reynolds and books and books and miniatures and things that have belonged to people and there are silver soup plates and footmen in gold laces, but they seem never to have been *bought* at all, but to have grown there. . . .

Of course, what really made it interesting—thrilling—was she had found "the story" there, as she felt, being enacted in real life. She sent the Crewe children books, including her own pathetic little tale, "Sara Crewe," and received from their father this letter:

Crewe Hall, Crewe,
February 6, 1896.

Dear Mrs. Burnett:

I must not delay longer in thanking you for your kindness to the children—and to myself—by the gift of the three books. Before handing them to their rightful owners, I have been enjoying them myself, and take special pride in claiming Sara Crewe as a relation. The graceful tenderness of her story delights me more than I can say.

With warm thanks, I am

Yours sincerely,

Crewe.

The "Lady of Quality" book was brought out in March, 1896. By that time she had made a desperate decision to get through with "De Willoughby," and had run away from London to Paris, in order to be able to do it.

"Clorinda" soon took her place among the "best sellers" both in England and America. Her literary success was likewise definite. Concrete evidence of this fact came in a letter from Oswald Crawfurd, Chairman of the Directors of the London Authors' Club:

The Authors' Club,
3 Whitehall Court, S. W.
July 4, 1896.

DEAR MRS. HODGSON BURNETT:

At a meeting of the Directors of the Authors' Club, held this afternoon, it was unanimously resolved to invite you to be the guest of the Club at the first public dinner which we have ever given to a lady writer.

I have accordingly the honor in the name of our Club to ask you to be our guest on any day you may elect in the first three weeks of July. . . .

So here was the budding orator confronted with making of another speech. She did it apparently with much less trepidation than in the previous case.

In her brief speech Mrs. Burnett gave this explanation of Clorinda:

". . . Mr. Oswald Crawfurd has spoken most kindly of a woman for whom I care very much. Her name is Clorinda Wildairs. To me Clorinda Wildairs implies a great deal, and I am always glad when she is understood. Not long ago a lady—not an Englishwoman—reproved me for her. 'Why,' she said, 'I think she is just dreadful. She uses such bad language.' 'Yes,' I said, 'she does. They did in those days—and, what is more, they did not call it bad language. They regarded it in the light of spirited colloquialism.' 'Well,' she replied, 'anyhow, I think she was real unprincipled to kill that man.' 'What,' said I, 'you think it unprincipled to kill a man! I have been gathering the impression lately that societies were to be formed to make that kind of thing a sort of religious observance.' Another lady wrote me from America, not so much to reprove as to remonstrate. She asked me what Little Lord Fauntleroy would think, and begged me to tell her what I meant. I have not had time to reply yet, but when I have I shall re-

spond that in my sanguine moments I had hoped that the book itself might chance to explain what I meant, but if this hope was founded on an error of judgment, I can only say that I meant by it exactly what I meant by Fauntleroy and many other things, that after all good is stronger than evil, that love is greater than hate, and that surely somewhere —somewhere there is a Power more just to the atoms it has created than those atoms have yet learned to be to each other. It is not necessary to explain here what I meant, but if I were called upon to put its meaning into the briefest form, I think I should say it was this, 'To err is human—to retrieve divine.'"

It may have been, however, that the excitement of her speechmaking was greater than it seemed, for shortly after she fell ill with a heart weakness that brought her very close to death's door. By September, however, she had sufficiently recovered to be taken into the country.

During this summer took place the first passages of friendship between her and Lord Ronald Gower. The urbane and talented Hamilton Aïde was, so to speak, the go-between. From his home in Ascot he wrote, asking Mrs. Burnett to visit him for the day, adding as an inducement that Lord Ronald would also be a guest. She went, and the two found themselves in sympathy at once. She sent her new friend a copy of "A Lady of Quality," and he replied to the gift with a letter full of appreciation—saying that the book, all through, recalled "Esmond" to him, and that, in his opinion, it came close to being the best kind of historical novel, it being "a work so full of beauty—and what is still better, it is such a sincerely good book. . . . There is not a page in it that one would wish away."

Circumstances and mutual interests ripened this friendship quickly. In the following years she was to see much of Lord Ronald and his group.

The most important reason for going back to America at this time was to supervise the production of "The First Gentleman of Europe," which had been accepted by Daniel Frohman for production by his Lyceum company early in 1897.

Her return was to changed conditions in Washington. Doctor Burnett was no longer at 1770 Massachusetts Avenue, but had bought a house, half a mile away, on Farragut Square, and established himself there with his offices and his rooms full of books, and etchings, and Japanese objects of art. The move had become more or less inevitable.

During the years since the family had moved into the Massachusetts Avenue house, he had suffered considerable inconvenience, and perhaps some loss in his practice, from having his offices in a residence on the second floor, and in a locality so far removed from the centre of town. The arrangement had been in every way impractical and it was important now that he should have properly placed offices in the right district.

There was this besides, that Doro, thoroughly successful in his profession but giving much of his time to charity work and never charging large fees, had not the income to enable him to keep pace with the scale of household expenditures that Frances had gradually come to, and which it seemed necessary he should maintain when she left the house to him. Doro was, too, the more conservative by nature in handling money. The simplest solution of the problem was for him to have an office and home of his own, which he could regulate according to his own pocketbook, leaving the larger house free for her to handle also as she liked, and according as her necessities demanded.

And this division of the household was also a recognition of the separation that had already taken place in their

lives and sympathies. Mrs. Burnett's long illnesses had kept her away from the home in Washington so much of the time, and her work had carried her so far afield for such long periods, that the ties between her and Doctor Burnett had gradually loosened. He had been able to assist her greatly during her first years of writing, but he could no longer be of help to her. Moreover, differences of opinion had crept in, which seemed difficult to adjust.

So she took up her life at No. "1770" with Edith and the rest, having refurnished the empty second-story rooms out of which Doro had moved. But she did not stay long in Washington. The rehearsals for the production of "The First Gentleman of Europe" were on quite soon after the Christmas holiday. Frohman had done his best with both the cast and the production of "The First Gentleman." Mrs. Burnett plunged right into rehearsing the actors. The result was a really charming play, opening at the Lyceum, January 25, 1897, with a cast as follows:

George, Prince of Wales	James K. Hackett
Christopher Carteret	Charles Walcott
George Carteret	Edward J. Morgan
Oldfield	Felix Morris
Lord Carrsbroke	Frank Mills
Captain Norris	David Elmer
Lord Walden	H. S. Taber
Daphne	Mary Mannering
Lady Sark	Marie Shotwell
Mrs. Oldfield	Mrs. Thomas Whiffen

Mary Mannering made a huge personal success as Daphne, and the work of Edward J. Morgan as George Carteret, and Felix Morris as Oldfield, was highly praised by the critics. The play ran for several months before being sent on the road.

Work on the "Lady of Quality" play was being carried

on by Mrs. Burnett in America and by Stephen Townesend in England. In her letter about Mrs. Pat. Campbell's production of "Mrs. Ebbsmith," Mrs. Burnett expressed her admiration of the work of a Miss Eleanor Calhoun—an American. Miss Calhoun had been one of the first to ask for the opportunity of playing Clorinda, and Mrs. Burnett had given her more or less of a promise that if it were humanly possible, she should have first chance at the part. Daniel Frohman had other stars in mind. At one time he suggested Olga Nethersole. As a result, the negotiations with Frohman for "The Lady" came to an end. But, despite all she could do, the combination would not work out, in America at least, in favor of her friend:

March 11.

DEAREST VIV:

I can only write a few lines as usual but I can put a few lines in which may be useful. I will tell you hurriedly how matters stand. Arrangements have been made for the "Lady" which seem to promise well. A Miss Julia Arthur, who has been with Irving (who will speak for her fitness)—wants to return to America with a big, new production. She is wild for Clorinda, so are her friends and backers, who are willing to do *anything* to give her her chance. They have a great deal of money—expect and *want* to make a splendid production. They have paid $5,000 down in advance—taken Wallack's theatre, on which about $25,000 is to be spent on rearrangement and decoration by next October, when the play is to be produced.

. . . I had hoped to place Eleanor Calhoun—but you see how it is. The people who have money always have their own woman. There were so many obstacles to the California production that it was discouraging. Also, there did not seem to be large backing.—If the play is a success

here I shall hope we may be able to get Eleanor in in London.

These negotiations having been concluded, she decided to spend the summer in the Washington house, working. A new idea had seized her which she wanted to express as quickly as possible. This was nothing less original than a book which should tell what was passing in the life and mind of the hero of "A Lady of Quality," while the "Lady's" own story was unrolling—not a sequel, but a complement to that book, so to speak. So she set to work with the intention of braving all the rigors of a Washington summer and pushing out the book, "His Grace of Osmonde."

The imp of pain and weariness was keeping away from her, for a time at least.

The "job" of Osmonde was put through in time for the book to be published in November of 1897, and then the battle for the production of "The Lady" was on. Stephen came to America to help. The producing was not easy. There was discussion, difference of opinion, crises, and disappointment—and, finally, tragedy, melodrama, the unbelievable. To Vivian:

1770 Massachusetts Avenue,
October 8, 1897.

. . . The most extraordinary thing has happened to the "Lady of Quality." The play opened at the Detroit Opera House last Monday with triumphant prospects of success (though it was a first performance and I know a very imperfect one, which, during the three weeks tour, would have become incomparably improved). On Wednesday night the theatre took fire (from an adjoining building) and burned to the ground—all the magnificent costumes and really beautiful scenery being utterly destroyed.

Yesterday morning I received this telegram from Mr. Townesend, "Sorry to send bad news. Theatre burned to ground. Everything lost but I believe all our stuff insured." This is what might be colloquially termed a "facer" but somehow, those tricks of Fate rouse my fighting blood.

The news awoke in me perhaps the atoms of Cadraad Haard—one of my respectable first grand parents, of whom Burke's Peerage records that he was "A Chieftain, seated in the Isle of Anglesey, at the commencement of the 10th Century." My opinion is that when he was seated in the Isle of Anglesey at that early date he was inventing me and the Lady of Quality.

I always liked him. His name means "Cadraad the Handsome," and he was the progenitor of any number of delightful Welsh savages who were Chieftains and Kings and hacked each other to pieces with battle axes. Hence, I telegraphed immediately, "Splendid advertisement. If all insured means only delay, not loss. Tell Mr. Cheney so with my sincere regards. Clorinda Wildairs is not burned and will rise like a phoenix from the ashes. Courage, Comrades all."

To Miss Arthur I telegraphed, "Courage, Mistress Clo. All will be well. It is not a little matter like a burned theatre can dismay us."

The "Lady of Quality" was produced at Wallack's Theatre, New York, November 1, 1897.

Clorinda	Julia Arthur
John Oxon	Edwin Arden
Earl of Dustanwolde	Stephen Townesend

Of the smaller parts, the Duke of Osmonde was taken by Scott Inglis; the Chaplain by Robert McWade, and Geoffrey Wildairs by George Woodruff.

And to what Mrs. Burnett thought of the production, the following is a record:

Saturday.

. . . Edith and Herbert and Frank went to see it again from the front on Thursday night and they say it has already improved. . . . They no longer drag the thing but play it in about two hours and thirty five minutes—which proves the intelligence of the critics who had not the brain to see that it was not the play which was long but the acting and scene setting. Not a word has been cut. Miss Arthur has perhaps learned something from her experience. Edith says she got *rather* more spirit out of the first act.

It was *not* Mr. White who wrote the Herald criticism—(the stupid thing about the Seventh Commandment). Mr. White came to see me and we had a long talk. He had only seen the first two acts and felt exactly as I did—and in fact, was plainly relieved to find that I did not feel that I had the Clorinda of the book. He had read all the criticisms and asked me if I would answer in the Sunday Herald some questions he would compile. I have done this so you must be sure to get the Sunday Herald.

. . . Mr. Arden (John Oxon) came to talk with me. He writhes over the amateur incapacity of the thing as we do. "But," he said, "if it is any consolation to you, Mrs. Burnett, there is Money in it—a lot." "Well," I answered, "I could not be consoled for the fact that a splendid child had been made short legged, snub nosed, and plebian, but as Money is the only thing which proves one has made a success—we have at least the comfort of knowing that we are not connected with a failure. We might have the most perfect thing in the world and if it had not made Money it would have been counted as a thing which failed."

I am very tired and feel I must go home and really rest—

keep my brain quiet—live out of doors—brace myself after this long strain.

Despite all, the New York season went splendidly, and Miss Arthur was credited with a thorough success. After the New York season the play carried its success "on tour," until Miss Arthur, quite unexpectedly, brought the run to a close by marrying and retiring, at least temporarily, from the stage.

CHAPTER XXV

AN ENGLISH COUNTRY HOME AND A PASSIONATE GARDENER

Having set Miss Julia Arthur on her way to a success, the next step was to do what was possible to fulfil her promise to Miss Calhoun. That meant to achieve in some way an English production of the play in which Eleanor could star, and messages from Miss Calhoun in London lead to her sailing for England late in January.

Shortly after arriving, she became anxious about her Manchester relatives, and went up to see them. How the visit affected her, and what she tried to do to help the situation, she tells in a letter to Kitty:

63 Portland Place, 1898

My love Kitty:

. . . Do you remember my poor little cousins who were "the unfortunate family?" The little widow and her little boy (who has hip disease) and two unmarried sisters have been trying to keep body and soul together by letting three rooms of their tiny house to young men who pay them only *six shillings a week* for the accommodation they receive. Out of that they had to pay twelve shillings a week for rent, another five for gas and coal, which left the four of them sometimes almost a shilling a week to buy food and clothing—they at the same time doing their own washing and keeping the house clean in spite of Manchester filth and furniture and carpets in the last stages of decay.

"They're living in the front sittin' room on six shillins' a

week an' we're starvin' in the back part. It's slow murder—that's what I call it." That was what poor Helena, the youngest, told me she had said the week before I arrived. It was time that Fluffy came.

Oh, my Kitty, what we learned in those two weeks. We were in the world where one farthing counts, and where no one expects or dreams of any hope of pleasure or comfort. It roused the furious rebel Fluffy in me. Figuratively, I stamped my foot and shook my fist at Fate. I won't stand that sort of thing. Submission go to Hades!

I went and found a pretty, new, fresh little house, with more and better rooms, for more and better lodgers. I took it and paid the rent and gas and taxes in advance for a year; then I furnished it all from top to bottom. I made it *pretty*, actually pretty. Fancy even fifteen shillings a week young men having rooms which are fresh and comfortable and furnished and wall papered in harmonious color. Edith and I worked and worked and worked. We tramped about to cheap shops and said, "This is six pence a yard, but that is only five pence three farthings, so we will take that." I upholstered beds, and painted a room and bedstead and hung curtains and planned and contrived and calculated, and last Wednesday we returned here, leaving those poor dears almost trembling with fear lest they should wake up out of their fairy story.

I met in the hotel a nice man who is in a large manufacturing business in Manchester. I interested him in my scheme, and, being a dear of solid gold, he is going to tell his manager to fill the house with young men who can pay decent prices, and he is going to speak to some good men—also manufacturing—at his Club. He was so kind—so kind, and he said it was "our lodging house" and must be *made* to go. I believe he will make it go. Somehow, it will go. You will see.

The little lame boy is the loveliest little fellow you ever saw. He has eyes like a gazelle and is so sweet and lovable and merry as he swings about on his tiny crutches. He is only five years old—and what a heavenly time we had when his Dearest was with him. He had soldiers and picture books and watches, and string and pennies in his wee pocket. And he used to follow me from room to room when I was working, and put his arms round my neck and pat and kiss me, making the tenderest little yearning sounds. He had evidently heard his mother and aunts talking their troubles over before I came, and speaking of my having said I would help them. The first night I arrived he stood and stared at me with his big, lovely eyes wide and bright with ecstacy, and suddenly he broke forth, clasping his little hands in the most intense way, "Before you came I was *prayin'* and *prayin'* and *prayin'*—an' I said, '*When* will she come—*when* will she come—*when* will she come?' "

This was truly the "Romantick Lady" in action, and this particular fairy story was one of the rewarding ones, for comfort and comparative prosperity did come to the little group, and lasted. The little boy and she kept up a friendship that grew closer as he developed into a man; himself taking up bravely the burden of supporting the family, proving he could do his share, even though on crutches. His name was Willie Daniels—and there turned out to be other things that she could do to advance his particular fairy story in later years.

It was at this time that Mrs. Burnett decided to take a step in her domestic life which seemed a proper and logical one. Through her attorney in Washington she applied for a divorce on the ground of desertion. Her own point of view is clearly expressed in the first paragraphs of this letter.

63 Portland Place, W.
February 28, 1898.

DEAREST VIVIAN:

In some sense this is more a business letter than anything else. I wish to tell you something which I should prefer you should hear directly from me. You may remember that some little time ago you said that if the separation between your father and myself were complete, the position would be easier for you. I did not quite understand why it would be so, but I had no doubt you had a practical reason, and what you inferred rather set me to thinking.

For a number of years many of my friends have expressed themselves strongly on this subject, and finally I have decided that they are right. By consulting a lawyer I have found the steps to be taken are quite simple and can be done quite privately. My English training makes me dislike all that sort of thing but for many reasons I can see it is best that the thing should be done, and apart from all things—to be neither married nor unmarried is a difficult position.

A curious thing is that I find that the majority of people believe me to have been legally separated for years. This makes the matter much simpler.

. . . This matter will be arranged privately and with dignity, and it is better for both that it should be done. . . .

As in everything else, in this case, too, Doro gave her her wish. He entered no defense and the matter was arranged simply and quickly. The son's problem after this was to keep properly balanced, a divided allegiance of love.

In the following, which are the closing paragraphs of the letter above, she records the first steps of an important move:

. . . I wish you had been with us when we went into Kent a couple of weeks ago. I think I am going to take a

place called "Maytham Hall," Rolvenden. It is a charming place with a nicely timbered park and a beautiful old walled kitchen garden. The house is excellent—panelled, square hall, library, billiard room, morning room, stables, two entrance lodges, a porch, and a square tower on the roof from which we can see the English Channel.

We are only ten miles from the sea and the roads are perfect for bicycling. The views from the windows are very pretty. Can you believe that I can have such a place for *less than half* what I pay for this house—not to mention the fact that the taxes will be about half what one is assessed in town. Then, one lives so much more cheaply for a score of reasons—and—most important of all—I can work so much better in the country. It is under two hours from town so one can have Saturday to Monday house parties and can also run up to London for either business or pleasure when it is necessary.

. . . I must add one thing I know you will be glad to hear. I am working steadily on "De Willoughby" and am hoping it may be ready for the autumn. Edith is quite wild about it—which is so good for me.

. . . With all my love, dear one,

Your own,

MAMMY.

The taking of Maytham Hall began a new era in her life, and introduced a new and consuming interest. Here began what might be called her Pastoral period; here entered the Passionate Gardener. She had always been keenly interested in flowers, but the joy of planning a garden and personally supervising the planting of bulbs and the setting out of plants had never been hers. The leasing of Maytham provided the opportunity. This love of gardens becoming part of her life, she turned it with her characteristic

VIVIAN BURNETT AT HARVARD

Picture taken for the graduating class of 1898.

alchemy into literature, and the particular fragrance and outdoor beauty of her later books begins here at her contact with the English gardens of Maytham.

There was much more than gardens in Maytham, however, to appeal to a Romantick Lady. Maytham was "The Hall" of the little Village of Rolvenden. It, and the people in it, by virtue of history and custom dating back hundreds of years, belonged to the people of Rolvenden; that is, with something like the feeling of feudal days, "The Hall" was looked to in all cases of sickness, misfortune, or sudden death. When the Hall carriage drove down Rolvenden "street," all children and housewives courtesied, and smocked laborers, with belted knees, pulled their forelocks in deferential salutation. On the Hall grounds stood the quaint old Gothic stone church of Rolvenden, mentioned in the Domesday Book. It was like living actually in a story.

And she had her own practical interpretation of her place in the cast of this story. She made it her task to find the poor, the decrepit, the bedridden in the little territory that had fallen to her as her domain, and though her means would not let her be as much Lady Bountiful as she wished, there was very little actual suffering in the vicinity of the Hall during her years of tenure.

Not the least of the virtues of Maytham Hall's location was that there were interesting people near. Henry James, in his summer home, was only a short tricycling distance away—six miles, at Rye. Ellen Terry was a few miles off, at Small Hythe, and Kipling's home was near enough for him to be encountered once in a while, trundling his bicycle up a difficult hill. Maytham stood on the edge of a slope, having a view on clear days over the low rolling reaches of the Weald of Kent, right to the sea and the Cinque Ports of Rye, Winchelsea *et al.*, taking in rise after rise crowned

with windmill and thatched farmhouse. The house, above the cellars, dated back only half a century to a fire which had destroyed a structure of an older period. The brick walls of the gardens, leaning and lichen-covered, evidently belonged to the period of the foundation, perhaps four hundred years past. With immense trees on the lawn and in the park, broad-flagged walks about the house, bakeries, wineries, piggeries, wood-houses, smoke-houses, huts, and pens and kennels of all sorts and sizes strung out under a picturesque roof line from both sides of the house, it had an atmosphere of eld that even its somewhat commonplace and modern façades could not entirely dispel.

Conferences with theatrical managers over Eleanor and "The Lady," work on "The DeWilloughby Claim," and the long-drawn-out details of furnishing and decorating Maytham Hall, kept Mrs. Burnett pretty well occupied during such part of the season as she remained in London.

She was at this time seeing much of Henry James. Having bought a set of his books, and having sent them to him to be autographed, he countered with this delightful note:

34 De Vere Gardens, W.,
June 16, 1898.

DEAR MRS. BURNETT:

And yet I *lingered*—I never leave your presence and precinct on wings or by leaps.—I was leaden-footed and most reluctant. And now I'm glad of anything—even anything so dreary as my own books—that may renew our communion.

I am divided between joy at the thought of so many copies sold—my publishers' statement is usually *one* on alternate years—and anguish for your having added that thumping, pecuniary excrescence to the treasure you are lavishing at Maytham.

But I will charge you nothing for the signs-manual.

There, don't take them to Maytham (unless you are really otherwise homeless); they will require an extra van. However, if you do, I will speed over and scatter broadcast that I am

Yours most respectfully,
HENRY JAMES.

The following show the neighborliness that sprang up between them:

Lamb House, Rye,
Wednesday.

NOBLEST OF NEIGHBOURS, AND MOST HEAVENLY OF WOMEN!—

Your gorgeous, glorious gift shook Lamb House to its foundations an hour or two ago—but that agitated structure, with the light of purpose rapidly kindling in its eye, recuperates even as I write, with a sense of the futility, under the circumstances of a mere, economical swoon. We may swoon *again*—it is more than likely (if you *can* swoon from excess of—everything!)—but we avail ourselves of this lucid interval absolutely to *fawn* upon you with the force of our gratitude.

It's too magnificent—we don't deserve the quarter (another peach, please—yes, it *is* the 7th—and *one* more fig—it *is* I can't deny it—the 19th!) Well, I envy you the power to make a poor, decent body so happy—and, still more, so proud. The decent body has a pair of *other* decent bodies coming to him for the week's end, from town, and—my eye! *won't* he swagger over his intimate friend, the Princess of Maytham, for whom these trophies and treasures are as mere lumps of sugar or grains of salt.

For once in my life I shall be as I have always yearned and fondly dreamed: I shall say, "Tompkins, hand the fruits." And Tompkins, who has a red nose and is universally hideous, will look for the occasion like the cele-

brated picture of Utica's daughter, with the groaning, golden salver flourished in the air.

It has its crushing side—but I shall have sufficiently rebounded, even from *that* week's work (under the grape cure) to ride over to you again and pour forth at your feet the unalterable sentiments of yours, dear Mrs. Burnett, more and more gratefully and constantly,

HENRY JAMES.

P. S. I shall wire my afternoon.

Lamb House, Rye.
November 11.

DEAR ILLUSTRIOUS AND GRACEFUL NEIGHBOR:

Your letter has the fullest charm of kindness and wit, and I am in a poor frame to acknowledge it worthily, being half blind with a sickish cold—which is agreeably developing, however, so that if I wait for it to leave me clean and alert, I shall risk seeming to you a laggard in courtesy.

Take it from me then, in staggering accents and with profuse pocket-handkerchiefs, that I am touched greatly by your horribly frustrated little glimpse of my really amiable and almost interesting little old house. Yes—it has a meaning—but you couldn't read out a word or two of that.

If I had only known you were coming I would have pulled myself so straight! I shall insist on knowing it very soon. I stay here till (toward) Xmas—perhaps even through it, on to Jan. 1st, the latter, in fact, most probably, if I see my way on Jan. 1st, as I desire to go abroad till April.

I am finishing, for dear life, a book—and the day after it is done shall wheel straight over to ask you for luncheon, when I will arrange and settle everything—anent, I mean, the *other* visit.

I will come with pleasure for some Sunday. I much desire a long, fraternizing talk with you, and as full a comparing of notes as a mole hill can compare with a mountain. I've the faintest recollection of your view, your woody gardens, garden produce or wild park scenery. I hope you are taking root half as firmly as I. I'll pull up mine for a minute just to *show* you. But I require just at this moment more of a tucking-in treatment. I am yours in a passion of appreciation and sneezes,

HENRY JAMES.

P. S. I hope to finish about the 25th.

The first summer at Maytham was much broken up, and the house itself not in satisfactory order for much entertaining. Stephen Townesend was, of course, constantly coming from London and going back again on business. Madge and Ella Hepworth-Dixon, bringing with them their brilliant conversation and their fresh contact with all worthwhile going on in London, came on their first visits. There were, of course, also the usual visits of courtesy to the new tenant of Maytham from the kind people of the countryside, who fraternized with her in her mounting enthusiasm over her garden, and helped to make it with contributions from their experience and from their own beds or greenhouses.

She spent most of the fall months in deep study of such entrancing volumes as "Kelway's Seed & Plant Catalog," and revelled in placing orders for seeds, bulbs, and plants to perfect the next year's garden. A letter from David Murray, the landscape painter and Royal Academician, gives a bit of the color of her life during this winter, spent at Maytham, with occasional trips to London to see people or the theatres.

1 Langham Chambers
Portland Place, W.
December 28, 1898.

My dear Mrs. Hodgson Burnett:

After the pleasure of seeing you, and our conversation about roses, in which I promised to find from Sir Henry A. Blyth, of Stanstear House, Stanstear, Essex, where he got the French roses I described to you, I saw him and his brother, Sir James, who, on hearing what I had to say on the subject, became each delightfully reminiscent of the pleasure they had often derived from passages in your works, and each was eager to send you a few of the roses in question.

Sir Blyth has just been here to tell me he has asked his gardener to address to you—I think he said to Ashford Station (!!!) from which I hope it may be convenient for you to get them—300 plants. He wished me to say for him that they should be planted thickly in a bed so as to show none of the ground when in foliage, and I do hope you will get good results from them.

I know Sir James Blyth had his table, the other evening when dining the Duke of Cambridge, decorated with these roses, *grown out of doors now.*

. . . Wishing you, my dear Mrs. Hodgson Burnett, all mirth at this season, and a year of happiness,

Very faithfully yours,

David Murray.

The roses referred to were a variety called Laurette Messimy (rose-lovers take notice), and were favorites with Mrs. Burnett for her gardens wherever she made them, and wherever the roses would grow.

Doctor and Mrs. Kenneth Campbell, friends of Stephen's, were among the first invited guests to Maytham. They

became something more than visitors; work hands, in fact, as is revealed in this early letter to Mrs. Campbell, who became the "Fair Rosamond" of all the following years:

Maytham Hall,
Rolvenden, Kent

DARLING, FAIR ROSAMOND:

I am missing you every day more and more, and the Herbaceous Border is pining for your society. I have been working hard at it. Bolton got me a whole lot of things from one of his gardener friends, and the second bed is nearly full. I had the joy of finding scores and scores of little poppy plants which had come up by themselves from last year's seed, and I have been putting them out in groups. They were in the Rose Walk.

. . . The lambs are big and ferocious now. They fight like lions over their milk. I am disappointed in their characters. A ferocious lamb is as bad as a blood-thirsty dove.

. . . Stephen sends his kind regards and feels as I do that in your absence the garden may become a ruin, as our best "hand" is gone. You will be pleased to hear that the Rose Garden has now a thin, little green beard of grass. . . .

Yours affectionately,
FLUFFY.

The "ferocious" lambs were two weanlings, brought up by hand.

The Rose Garden became a most important feature of Maytham Hall, for it served as Mrs. Burnett's outdoor work-room, and in it large portions of many of her later books were written. Enclosed by high brick walls, Mrs. Burnett found an old orchard, reverted to wilderness. Ancient apple-trees covered the place with shade, and what had been "walled fruit"—pears, peaches, plums, in espalier—still clung to the walls. It was entered by a low arched

gateway in the wall, closed by a wooden door, and provided the particular sense of quiet and seclusion that Mrs. Burnett always required for her work. The thing next to do was to make it beautiful and cosey, and this meant, of course, flowers. The ground underneath the twisted, leaning old apple-trees was cleaned of all its weeds and thorns, sown with grass, and then, at every available place, roses were planted to climb up the ancient trunks and over the walls. The result was a bower of incredible beauty and fragrance during the spring, as well as shady and restful during the summer. Under a close-set group of the biggest trees Mrs. Burnett put her table and chair, with tuffet and rug to make her comfortable, and a big Japanese umbrella to hoist in case she needed protection. The almost undisturbed stillness of the place invited the birds and the little animals. So there she sat, writing, whenever the fairness of the day permitted, with the robins and sparrows as her guests, even alighting on her table to satisfy their curiosity as to the *huge* visitor to their domain; while the squirrels and rabbits scuffed around, carrying on their family quarrels unafraid.

With the interest in the planting and the progress of the Rose Garden, and "herbaceous borders" of all varieties in every available corner of the grounds, and with house guests coming and going, the days of the spring and summer passed quickly.

Eleanor Calhoun at last got together backers and a manager, so an English production of the "Lady of Quality" became a certainty.

In February, 1889, "The Lady" was produced at the Comedy Theatre, and Mrs. Burnett received another blow to her confidence in the inevitable victory of good intentions. The English production did not get the favorable reception that had been accorded the play in America, and

THE SECRET GARDEN

Mrs. Burnett's outdoor retreat at Maytham Hall. Here she wrote "The Shuttle" and had the confabs with her animal friends which resulted in such stories as "My Robin" and "The Secret Garden."

Eleanor's presentation of the character of Clorinda did not seem to particularly please. Mrs. Burnett was bitterly disappointed over the outcome.

So even with beautiful Maytham to play in, the experiences she was going through made her unhappy in England, especially as Stephen was proving exceedingly hard to handle. He was taking a position with regard to their association that had in it a suggestion of domineering ownership she did not understand. It frightened her and she looked toward America for release. To Kitty she wrote:

Maytham Hall,
Rolvenden, Kent, 1899.

DARLING ONE:

. . . I have vowed to myself that I will spend my winter in America, which is a place beautiful England makes one love. One seems to need them both—America for mental stimulus, and England for picturesqueness and rest. I am settling down to the effort to finish DeWilloughby. Pray a prayer—a Mental Science prayer—for me every morning at ten o'clock.

And this to Edith at Washington:

Maytham Hall,
Rolvenden, Kent.
Saturday, September 30, 1899.

DEAREST EDITH:

This morning I cabled to you that I sail on the 29th of October. I sail on the St. Paul of the American Line. In a few weeks I shall steam into the station again and see you all standing outside the bars like lions at the Zoo. I require you all to be there—Edith and Frank and Effie and Virginia and Will and Charlie and the Holts—all of you whom I love and who would come to Maytham at once on landing in England. It will be too lovely.

. . . Have I told you that actually—*actually*—my book

[DeWilloughby] is finished. It is in the printer's hands, and will be published in November. Perhaps it will be out by the time I get to you.

. . . My love to you all—every—every one.

Your affectionate,

FLUFFY.

Mrs. Burnett really found the joy she expected among her home-folks and the simple, intimate friends of Washington. Quite soon after her arrival she wrote to Kitty:

1770 Massachusetts Avenue,
November 13, 1899.

. . . I have but one trouble. I came over with the intention of going to Vivian in Denver for a holiday with him. We have been writing to each other about it all summer. I had prepared my wardrobe specially for a cold climate and had even bought a gorgeous little seal skin coat made splendid with ermine, because I wanted Viv's Mammy to be very smart as well as warm. And now I am told that with my weak heart I cannot *live* in that high altitude—and I remember my illness at Mr. Hutchin's place and after my stay there—and also my illness in the Berkshire Hills. . . . I am going to consult another doctor and I have sent for Viv to come for Christmas and then try taking me himself by gradations. I dare not go alone with Thompson. It would be so awful to be taken ill on the train and left somewhere to die, or at least ill without anyone I loved near me.

Being obliged to give up this trip to Denver was a great blow, for she and Vivian had seen nothing of each other since the spring before he had been graduated at Harvard. Vivian did come East for his first business holiday, but it

was considered unwise that she should go back with him. Near Christmas she wrote to Kitty, evidently consenting to help her in some Yule Tide kindness:

1770 Massachusetts Avenue,
December 22, 1899.

My own Kitty:

Christmas is here and a new Century is upon us. A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Century, darling. You begin yours bearing others burdens and doing sweet deeds. That is Kitty. We are always just what we *are*.

Fluffy begins her century wound up in the web of having tried to help one person and borne the consequences, and in rejoicingly beginning to help another, which, in this case, will of course turn out *quite* differently. They always *are* quite different—when one begins, and it would be so impossible not to stretch out a hand. But we are what we are, and the kind of thing it is the law of one's nature to do one does in the face of the condign punishments which are inevitably inflicted as the reward of what we think are good deeds.

I am beginning to form a new system of ethics—but they will not help me.

I am so glad you are able to do this particular good, dear, you are doing now—because *not* to do it would make you unhappy. May all be well with you.

The middle paragraph show that the problem of Stephen was not to be shaken off, even though the ocean separated her from him, and it was perhaps this which made her restless, so that she stayed in Washington only a few weeks after Vivian had left for Denver. In February she sailed for Europe, going to Genoa. There she was met by Stephen Townesend and married him.

CHAPTER XXVI

"THE SHUTTLE"

When the couple returned from a brief stay in Italy, life at Maytham, on the surface, at least, ran smoothly, with every appearance of gaiety. There were guests, and the summer of 1900 passed with much work being done on the herbaceous borders; and some being done at the table in the Rose Garden, the subject of that labor being a new novel, at that time called "The Destiny of Bettina," and later "The Shuttle." The basis of the novel was an international marriage, and the subject-matter was in several ways suggestive of the author's own conditions of life. Always much of a traveller between the two coasts of the Atlantic Ocean, during the next period of half a dozen years she became a veritable shuttle herself.

Because of her state of mind, and, too, her state of health, she felt she could not stand an entire winter shut in at Maytham, so in the late fall she took Lord Burgclere's house in London, in Charles Street, off Berkely Square.

Richard Watson Gilder had been spending some time in Europe on account of his health, and she wrote to him, soon after going to the new house, in something quite like the old-time vein. *The Century* was interested in the new novel.

48 Charles Street,
Berkely Square,
December 4, 1900.

DEAR MR. GILDER:

. . . In the first place, I cannot express my gratitude to Mr. Buel [Clarence Clough Buel, assistant editor of *The Century*, and later Vivian's father-in-law] for realizing that I *could not* safely let you begin to publish. If I had tried to

do the thing I should now—having died of brain fever—have been decently interred in some unpleasant cemetery and my readers would have been rending their garments because they could *never* know how it worked itself out—that Destiny of Bettina.

I have a kind of luck. It *is* a chance, taking the form of luck, that my years of theories on the subject of these grotesque international marriages should have begun to express themselves just at a time when so many are reflecting on their lack of dignity. The things are, of course, not grotesque or undignified, because they are international—far from it—very far—but because they have been so often such obvious affairs of the purchase by not too fastidious or spirited young women of extremely damaged articles.

. . . You understand, do you not, that it is not in the least anti-international marriage—I am, in fact, so unlikely ever to be "anti-anything".—There are likely to be things in it which might entitle it to call itself "The Merging of Two Nations." (We are merging, you know, and it's an absorbingly interesting thing to look on, at and give thought to). It is only anti—a certain order of particularly gross, bad bargain.

At the time when I was being absolutely driven by the impetus of story and was full of interest in it—I was bowled over by an attack of heart failure and was dragged too far away from it to get back easily.

As soon as I arranged myself in town and found that Lady Winifred's particular room closed in about me with exactly the atmosphere I want for work, I began again.

I should tell you that we have Lord Burgclere's house. He married Lady Winifred Herbert—a daughter of the Earl of Carnarvon. This special room is perfect for me. I could not explain what it is I want so much in the place I work in—but it is here. Perhaps Lady Winifred left it herself. I

have theories about houses. One does not prepare oneself to *love* the house one takes for six months—but I feel, that it is almost indecent to be as fond of another person's house as I find I am of this. I shall leave it in April with my handkerchief pressed to my face when I get into the carriage—just like a person entering a mourning coach to go to a funeral. The intimate affection has assumed the nature of a problem.

. . . But behold, how I have "Mrs. Nickleby-ed" away from Bettina, who is the absolute reason for this letter. I will send you some more of her presently. Yesterday I left her in the train on her way to pay a visit to Stornham.

. . . I am waiting breathlessly for tomorrow when she will reach Stornham and I shall discover what she finds there and how she finds it. I don't know this morning—except in that nebulous way. Rosie's slightness of mind and will, have been, of course, stupified and made helpless by desolation—and the overbearingness of brutality—but I shall not know until tomorrow just the form things will take. I wish I could say *when* this will finish itself. I *never* know. But it will, I think, say many things before it is done. I think it must go on now. . . .

Yours sincerely,

FRANCES HODGSON TOWNESEND.

Bettina would not go forward at the pace demanded by the editors, who wanted her to begin a serial in November, 1900, but there were other fish to fry, as she wrote to Vivian:

48 Charles Street,
Berkely Square, W.
February 17, 1901.

. . . You remember that Mr. Gilder wanted to begin the year with "The Destiny of Bettina" and I found it impossible to let him have it in time for last November. He

had, however, advertised my name in the year's list and implored me to let him have *something* to uphold the advertisement—if it were only three thousand words. I did not want to lay Bettina aside but thought I would try.

An incident which occurred at Maytham had suggested a short story I thought I should never write. I sat down to make a try at it and it proved so interesting and wrote itself with such ease that in less than two weeks I had made a short serial—two or three numbers, I don't know which.

. . . It will, also, I think, make a small book—the kind of thing people buy by the tens of thousands if it is popular. This is such a dear thing, I can't tell you how I enjoyed writing it. It is a study of a type, and in an atmosphere I know so well. It is called "The Making of a Marchioness" and it is a picture of a nice, simple, sweet prosaic soul who arrives at a good fortune almost comic because it is in a sense so incongruous. Its heroine is a sort of Cinderella—a solid, kind, unselfish creature—with big feet instead of little ones. Her name is Emily Fox-Seton, and I absolutely love her—as you will. She is invited to a big country house because she can be made useful, and she trudges about waiting on every one and being so sympathetic and interested in the various beauties who are "stalking" the Marquis, who is such an abnormal catch—and he coolly proposes to her. "I'm a selfish man myself," he said, "and I want to marry an unselfish woman."

Don't you think that rather nice? The cleverness of the thing (I know it is clever) lies in the studies of character and the way in which the most wildly romantic situation is made compatible with perfectly every-day and unromantic people and things. The Marquis of Walderhurst is totally unromantic and so is nice, *un*clever Emily Fox-Seton.

She started in as soon as the spring weather would permit to make the most of the possibilities of Maytham and

her friends. Vivian found he could come over for a few weeks, and that he could bring with him dear Charlie Rice for his first trip to Europe.

After Vivian had had a brief taste of Maytham life with its lawn-fêtes for the village children, its gay cricket-matches for the county players and her visitors, its tennising and croqueting for week-end guests, and its constant, sparkling dinner-parties, there was a two weeks' trip through the picture-galleries of Holland and Belgium, Vivian, sister Edith, and Mammy making the party, on the happy termination of which Vivian fell ill, and was invalided until December. Then it was manifestly the thing to take him out of the dark, English winter, and so Maytham was closed and the family, leaving Stephen behind, sailed for America on the *Minnehaha* of the Atlantic Transport Line.

At no period of her life had Mrs. Burnett been in so nervous a condition. The task of keeping the surface of things at Maytham smooth while struggling with the temperament of Stephen had brought her to the last frayed edge of her endurance. Finding a place in roaring New York where she could live proved a most difficult task, and it finally seemed best to send her for treatment to a Sanitorium at Fishkill-on-Hudson. It was there that she had to face Stephen—come hastily and irately to America—and tell him that, for her, life with him was impossible. This firm stand, made with the very last ounce of her nervous energy, enabled her to end the chapter of "Stephen" and be a free person once more.

Looking around, after she had made some progress toward health, for a place near enough to New York to permit week-end visits by the working male members of her family, Vivian, Ernest, Archie, Uncle Frank Jordan (sister Edith's second husband), and her friends as well, she hit upon East-

hampton, and settled herself in a cosey cottage on the edge of the dunes overlooking the sea and Georgica Pond.

It was a summer of continued illness. She did, however, finish "The Methods of Lady Walderhurst," the sequel to "The Making of a Marchioness," a picture of the fine, simple character of Emily Fox-Seton amid the more sophisticated and dramatic surroundings in which she found herself as the wife of the Marquis of Walderhurst. This was serialized in *The Century* in 1901, and brought out in book form at the end of the year.

Late in the summer she began a piece of work that actually fascinated her. It was a dramatization of her early child's book, "Sara Crewe," which she eventually called "A Little Un-fairy Princess," a title it held for the production in England, but which was changed for America to the more commonplace "A Little Princess." When writing in the juvenile field, Mrs. Burnett's work always seemed to go on fairy wings, and she literally revelled in the idea of taking the "magic transformation" scene she had sketched in the short story of Sara Crewe and expanding it, in all its dramatic possibilities and possibilities of detail alluring to children, for the stage. The play was quickly finished and found a producer in Charles Dillingham, who discovered an ideal "Sara" in a diminutive little actress, Millie James, daughter of the famous Shakespearean, Louis James. She had already done much with juvenile parts. A delightful cast of children was engaged, and Mrs. Burnett, always a real child herself, found herself embarked upon the congenial occupation of helping rehearse them. Pauline Chase (the Pink Pajama Girl), later Barrie's protégé and his first Peter Pan in London, was of the cast, and also Mabel Taliaferro. There was much to solace her and comfort Mrs. Burnett in the whole experience. The play, upon its production at the Criterion Theatre, New York, Jan-

uary 14, 1903, met with a success quite comparable to her "Fauntleroy," and brought her into loving contact with hundreds of grateful children and mothers.

It had had a previous production in England under the management of Seymour Hicks, with Miss Beatrice Terry in the title rôle, opening at the Avenue Theatre, London, September 18, 1902. For some reason the play did not meet with the same success in England as it did in America. A Mr. Robert Stanley was associated with the production. Later he came quite prominently into Mrs. Burnett's life.

The question of the winter residence in 1902 had been settled by taking a house at 44 West 87th Street, New York, for a year. Situated in the middle of the block, it was far enough from heavy traffic to give Mrs. Burnett something of the quiet she needed. Vivian had joined the forces in the book-publishing house founded by her old friend McClure as an offshoot of his immensely successful *McClure's Magazine,* and so was a nine-o'clock-at-the-desk-man who needed a home close to his office, which was a consideration which ruled with her in her decision to live, at all, in New York.

"The Destiny of Bettina" came out from its red-fibre envelopes, was revised, retyped, and started on its way to become a new book with the title of "The Shuttle." But work on it was desultory and disheartening and much interrupted. Out of the stay at this commonplace New York house there came, besides this fitful work on "The Shuttle," only the story entitled "In the Closed Room." On the opposite side of West 87th Street were some boarded-up houses, the basements occupied by caretaker families. In one of these was a slim-faced little girl that Mrs. Burnett, from the window of the bedroom where she spent much of her time, saw once in a while playing by herself on the sidewalk in a strange, lonely way. This child, with the mystery of the boarded-up windows, was sufficient to start

the imagination on a journey into the realm of the eerie, which resulted in that pathetic, psychic little tale about a spirit playmate, which was so understandingly illustrated by Jessie Willcox Smith.

No more days than absolutely necessary were spent in the New York house, which was ornate and oppressive. Mrs. Burnett had liked her experience with Easthampton the previous summer. She had met there and fallen in love with the DeKay family, mother and father and a half a dozen (or more) handsome and charming children, relatives of the Gilders. The DeKays were a summer fixture in Easthampton, and for that reason, and because of the charm of the village itself, she decided to go again.

There were other people in the Easthampton group that added to its attractiveness. John Drew had his summer house there, but was seen only at rare intervals, and Mrs. Robert Underwood Johnson was nearly always part of the mid-morning beach group that watched the surf bathers from under tents and parasols. The family of Cass Gilbert, the architect; Mrs. Anita F. van Lennep, a charming Chilean, wife of a New York banker; Maria Victoria Torrilhon, a brilliant young pianiste of French inheritance, who later became Vivian's mother-in-law; Mrs. Durant Rice, who founded the famous Durant pottery kilns; Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Trevor Hill (Mabel Wood Hill, the composer), were Easthamptonians of the period with whom she had more or less contact, and who made the place congenial to her. So the summer of 1903 found her installed in another little cottage, called Dune Crest.

Mrs. Burnett was still struggling with the mental and physical results of the conflict with the Stephen problem. She was temperamentally—and by a long period of intensive self-training—an idealist, always seeing people and incidents as they ought to be but were not, and never could

turn out to be. Such smaller shocks as she had had to her faith had seemed mere incidents, palliated or explained away. But she had ventured everything on this matter of Stephen, and felt herself buried under the ruins of it all, with shaken faith, broken spirit, and shattered nerves.

Quite to be reckoned among the marvels of her career is the fact that physically, spiritually, and mentally she did survive, and as a woman and writer rose the higher for it. She got back into the stride of her work; hope revived; there seemed a possibility of a future. She wrote to Vivian:

Dune Crest,
East Hampton, Long Island.

DEAREST VIV:

"In the Closed Room" finished itself on Wednesday. The writing of it was much more weird than the writing of the "Princess." It is The New Thing again and when I read it to Edith I found its effect to be—well, what I think it will be on all who read it. The thrill of things occult can be best felt, it seems to me, when they occur in the midst of quite simply mundane affairs, and occur quite simply as part of them. Then they become real.

. . . Later I shall finish "The Ban Dog,"—I may also do another. Two or three would make a strange little book called—for instance—something like "Such Things May Be"—or "Across the Line"—or "Upon the Brink."

"The Ban Dog" was a "shuddery" story she had started some years previously, based upon a Gaelic legend she had heard in which a ghostly dog-spirit carried vengeance and horror into a great country house. Short fragments of it remain. "In the Closed Room" and "The Ban Dog" represent the beginning of that thread of mysticism, occultism, beyond-the-border-feeling found with increasing

strength in many of her later books. It was because of this mystic strain in her thought that her friendship with Lady Sibell Cromartie grew. Lady Sibell was a niece to Lord Ronald Gower, a wee Scotch person who, from childhood, had revelled in all the legends and superstitions of the Highland folk—gathering them in from nurse, or gillie, or wherever she found believing, simple-minded country people. Ella Hepworth-Dixon started the friendship.

As the Stephen episode sank into the past, Mrs. Burnett began to find freedom in her handling of "The Shuttle." It had been on the way so many years that it seemed almost as if it would never be finished. But it was the next "big work," and as she returned to her normal self she began really to make progress with it.

Yet another thing, however, came to interrupt. Mrs. Burnett had always felt that there was a good play in "The Pretty Sister of José," the little Spanish novelette written shortly after "Fauntleroy." This idea came to life again suddenly at this time, because it appeared that Charles Frohman wanted a play of a new character for his beloved star, Maude Adams. Something emotional, romantic, picturesque, and red-blooded was desired as a sort of contrast to the things she had been doing; and when the possibilities of "The Pretty Sister" and Mrs. Burnett's draft of the play were presented to Mr. Frohman, it was decided to have a production as soon as possible.

For the winter Mrs. Burnett took a little slip of a house at 105 Madison Avenue, New York, and plunged into the work of polishing off her version, and helping in the rehearsal of the play. The matter went forward much more smoothly than such things ordinarily do, and the play opened at the Empire Theatre November 10, 1903. It was successful, but not riotously so. The hot, passionate quality of wayward little Pepita's temperament, which was the key

to the story as Mrs. Burnett saw it, did not, somehow, get over the footlights, and while the play ran a fair season in New York, and Miss Adams took it on tour, it could not be classed among the real dramatic successes of Mrs. Burnett or Miss Adams.

A play called "That Man and I" developed out of "DeWilloughby" at the suggestion of the actor Robert Hilliard, and was on its way to completion and production during the run of "The Pretty Sister." Mr. Hilliard gave the play a colorful and effective production, beginning January 25, 1904, at the Savoy Theatre, New York. For his leading woman he had Maude Fealy, a sweet and appealing young actress, who gave a really effective presentation of the wistful little North Carolina heroine, Felicity Fair. Hilliard played Dick Latimer. Mr. R. A. Stanley came over from London and helped direct this play.

For the time being the drama was Mrs. Burnett's chief interest, and although inside of the short space of a year she had had three New York productions and a play on the boards in London, she was eager for more. Her "fairy story" for Mr. Stanley, who appealed to her because he had lost money on the English "Princess" production, and was, besides, lame, was not yet, to her mind, finished, and she began a further chapter with an attempt to collaborate with him.

The slip of a house on Madison Avenue, with its gloomy parlor in the back, dominated by the thousand windows of the famous woman's hotel, The Martha Washington, was distinctly uncomfortable. Moreover, the roar of business New York poured over into the quieter Madison Avenue from Broadway and Fifth Avenue, brief blocks away. Then the city began to build a sewer through the street in front, so she fled, with the Stanley family, to Asheville, North Carolina, and wrote back to Vivian:

Asheville, N. C
March, 1904.

. . . Concerning the new play's being a play of costume—Little did I intend it. But you know how my doing this work with Mr. Stanley is merely the result of my desire to make up to him what he lost on "The Princess." It began with my thinking that I could do it through "That Lass" as a melodrama—because, I confess, I should not have thought of trying anything else. In work *not* melodramatic there is absolutely nothing for a collaborateur to do—except divide the proceeds—which scarcely seems enough. But he had been counting on "That Lass"—and when he heard in New York that there was no chance for melodrama in these days, he was so harrowed and disappointed that I began to cast about for something else.

Among other things I began to tell him of an idea which has been in the back of my mind for years. I may have spoken to you about it. It has to do with a mysterious highwayman attired in white—who proves in the end to be a beautiful, high-spirited, mischievous, young beauty, who really has played the part to frighten people and to right wrongs. It sounds ridiculously fantastic, but, passed through the crucible of your Mammy's ingenious brain, it is turning out "allurin'!" When first I mentioned it to Mr. Stanley he was so delighted with its originality and the fact that it seems a Maude Adams part, that life again filled his veins. Of course, such a chance would be totally different from a share in a mere melodrama.

. . . This thing is full of comedy.—It begins in an old, half-ruined castle in a wild part of Ireland—where Brian, Earl of Clanfergus,—who has ruined himself for the Stuart cause—has been obliged to hide himself after the flight of James 2nd to France. Beggared and broken, he lives there with an old family priest—Father Meath—one serving man

—and his only child—the Lady Judith.—All else that is left to him is a few thousand acres of bog and the few hovels of a straggling village at his gates. And it's Lady Judy, my dear, who's the jewel.

. . . Her costume in the first act is a short, frieze petticoat—red or blue—a red bodice and a handkerchief tied over her head. "Look at the mud on my petticoat, (shaking the rain off it)—and it wasn't much of a petticoat to begin with. Oh, now don't look at me like that, your lordship, darling. As if I wasn't fine enough for an earl's daughter on her birthday." (It is her birthday). "Look at me now!" (Her hands saucily on her hips). "Don't look at my petticoat! I'm better worth it."

She adored Asheville, and lived in one of the hotel cottages, called Sunnicrest. She was especially impressed with the wonderful work Mr. George W. Vanderbilt was doing in building up the great estate, and working community, of Biltmore; the size, the spirit, and meaning of it, aroused her admiration.

She got results from her work at Asheville, and wrote to Vivian:

Darling Only Child:

This is just a little shout of joy to tell you that your Mammy is a freed slave. The last play is finished triumphantly and I feel as if I did not know the person who walks about with me—no shackles clanking—no tons of lead lying upon her brain. I can walk miles and miles and am a wonder to all beholders.

. . . We leave here on Sunday afternoon and reach Washington on Monday morning. We stay with Virginia and Effie and then come home to our children to be wildly gay for weeks.

Have you seen the lots in Great Neck yet? Who knows but I might leave you building a house there during the summer.

The play is finished! The play is finished! The play IS finished!

Your,

MAMMY.

CHAPTER XXVII

AT MAYTHAM HALL AGAIN

The tug of Maytham at her heart had not diminished; it had, rather, increased; so she decided to tempt the fates and return. The tumult in the domestic side of her life had ceased. There was only a bare chance that on English soil anything would develop that would disturb her. Doctor Burnett, on the other hand, had, in March, 1904, married an old family friend, whom the boys had always called "Aunt Maggie," Margaret Brady.

Not feeling she could stay long in New York, and not wishing to arrive too early in the Spring at Maytham—also liking the Mediterranean trip in late winter—Mrs. Burnett planned to go to Italy with the Stanleys, and by easy stages, travel back to Rolvenden and her adored Maytham. Arrived at Maytham, she wrote:

DARLING ONLY CHILD: Maytham Hall, June 24, 1904.

. . . Mr. Stanley is the kindest and most indefatigable of travelling companions and his energy was really wonderful . . . he has a marvelous spirit. One cannot help but admire a man who, while he is so much disabled, simply does all the things a man with sound limbs could do—and does it without a hint of being fagged or tired.

How I wish and wish, my Only One, that you had been with us. You would have enjoyed yourself enormously. Of the Azores we became enamored. It is one of the places where I am to have a house.—You can live there for nothing among undreamed of beauty resting in the blue of the sea.

The beauty of the people is a wonder.—At Gibraltar we saw at every three steps children of such loveliness that we cried out aloud. I *never* dreamed of seeing so many rapturous creatures in such a small space. I suppose it is the Spanish and Moorish blood which produces the wonder of it. . . .

Without a doubt, Italy is the most adorable country in the world. We made a journey from Florence to Venice and one from Venice to Milan—each beyond words.—Then to Como—and Como is the final word. . . .

We arrived at Maytham on Wednesday. . . . Dear little Mrs. Haughton [wife of the artist Haughton, R. A.] walked down to Benenden to meet us on the road, and the dear Pagets [the local doctor's family] were waiting to welcome us on our own threshold. It all seems a dream from which it is difficult to waken. Nice, old Mr. Stedman had worked a motto in leaves on a sort of banner scroll, "Welcome home to Maytham," which was hung over the hall door. He had also sent up a beautiful, decorated cake with "welcome" on it, and he stood at his gate as we drove by, surrounded by his household and a group of children. I stopped the carriage, of course, to speak to him and shake hands.

. . . The new liveries look very nice and the two footmen are well set up young men. They are, however, so well matched that we cannot as yet commit them to memory, and each one says gravely in turn, "Are you Philip, or are you William?" Then, when one thinks one is speaking to Willip, he turns out to be Philliam. Yesterday our drive to Hawkhurst was enlivened by a heated discussion as to whether Philliam or Willip was on the box. The Stanleys insisted it was Philliam. I was sure it was Willip.

Maytham is beautiful, and the Rose Garden is full of leaping cascades of roses. . . .

Your, MAMMY.

Her own fairy-story was beginning to come true. Here she was, free to enjoy her beautiful garden and write as she pleased, and she had, too, it seemed, banished the Imp of Ill Health almost completely. It meant something very close to Paradise to her. In her beloved rose-garden the "Power" took full possession of her, and her pen began to fly. To her there could be no greater joy than that.

She wrote to Vivian:

Maytham Hall, Rolvenden, Kent.
August 19, 1904.

. . . Margaret Anglin came here for a day and night and I liked her *very* much. She is full of emotional power and charm. She wanted Judith immensely, but she is just about to rehearse a new play Mr. Perley is to produce for her. It appears she is really Irish and she knows the comedy and warmth of Irish character. I feel it is an absolute misfortune that I did not know her before. She would have been an adorable Judy.

. . . Mrs. Pat is going to America with "The Sorceress." Cyril Maude is producing a new play by Jacobs—but he wants to see "Glenpeffer," (The Making of a Marchioness transformed). If suddenly all the plays would begin to go at once I could make plans. As it is, I cannot make any yet. I may have to spend the winter at Maytham for economy's sake.

But things *do* unfurl themselves for me, don't they? The wonder of how all the past tragedy has melted into nothingness is to me a marvel beyond words. The hideous physical suffering has gone. "The Pain" is actually no more. And all . . . are as if they had never been. Can you believe it? I cannot. . . . Love to you, Darling Only One, from

Your

Mammy.

It will be seen that, not content with finishing "Judy," she had gone on with her dramatic fervor, and had made a play out of "Emily Fox-Seton," only emphasizing the man's part. Again, to Vivian:

Maytham Hall, Rolvenden, Kent.
September 22, 1904.

DEAREST ONLY CHILD:

. . . Maddie is still here, though Ella went to Lady Cromartie yesterday. Lady Cromartie—"the little Countess of Cromartie" as she is called, is expecting an heir in December, and is staying at one of the places of her uncle, the Duke of Sutherland—Lilleshare, in Shropshire. She would have come to Maytham if she had been well. She is the most dear little person. She was at the tea party at the Ladies' Field Club which Maddie and Ella gave for me when I ran up to London.—You remember, she is the grand niece of Lord Ronald Gower and I met her first at Hammerfield. The heir, I believe, is to be born at the great Stafford House, in town. Stafford House is one of the most magnificent great houses in England. It is the one of which the old Queen said to the Duchess, (Lord Ronald's mother, who was her dearest friend and for so many years the Mistress of the Robes), "I came from my house to your palace." This reads rather like "Somebody's letters to So and So," but I think it is interesting to recall things and people that make history.

Gilder was in England, and Mrs. Burnett wrote to him:

Garlant's Hotel,
Suffolk Street, Pall Mall.

DEAR MR. GILDER:

. . . Unpleasant rumors of your having been seriously ill had reached me and to have proof that you were *not* a desperate invalid was a great relief. That time honored

affection for you which seems to transform you into a cherished relative—though we rarely ever met and rarely ever shall—remains totally unchanged.

. . . We have had the most perfect summer at Maytham—not an English summer at all. It has been so perfect to return after an absence and find more roses and more friends to welcome me. The house has been full since June and the weather has given us such chances to bask.

. . . During the last few weeks I have been re-wording and developing for the Scribner's [for book publication] the story of "Sara Crewe," in which they wanted incorporated the additions made in the play of "A Little Princess." It will be now the nice, detaily kind of thing children love. You know, if any one has muffins for tea, it delights children to know *why* they had muffins, and how the muffins were baked. . . .

Yours sincerely,

FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT.

She was not yet in a frame of mind where she could calmly take up and finish "The Shuttle"—especially at Maytham. This idea of expanding to book size the original story of "Sara Crewe," by adding matter from the play, had seized her fancy, and provided just the right kind of work for this care-free time. Still keeping in the juvenile vein during this summer, Mrs. Burnett again connected herself with that most cherished volume of her own childhood, "Granny's Wonderful Chair," writing a delightful fairy-story preface to the new edition, brought out by her old friend, S. S. McClure. Of this happy period she wrote to Kitty:

". . . The most important thing to you I know, my very dear, is that not a cloud has crossed my summer, or a single thing happened to disturb it. Never was I so glad of anything as I am that I came to Maytham just at this particular time."

However, she could not stay long away from her family of boys, which now included Archie and Ernest, as well as Vivian. The latter and Ernest, with Hollister Logan (son of Ernest's friend and backer) were living in bachelor apartments at 225 West End Avenue, New York; so Dearest, with sister Edith and Frank Jordan, Edith's husband who had become a valued and important member of Fluffy's household, set sail for America on the White Star Liner *Cedric*, December 21, hoping to arrive in America at least for the after-Christmas gaieties. The boat, however, had hardly left the dock at Liverpool before it was enveloped in one of the worst fogs the north of England had ever seen. For several days it was obliged to remain at anchor in the lower Mersey, and out of this experience many years later she wrote the first of the "Romantick Lady" stories, entitled "A Christmas in the Fog." At length she did reach American shores and was made comfortable with a suite at the Regent Hotel, on Sherman Square, New York, just around the corner from the boys, who were at 70th Street and West End Avenue.

The winter of 1904 and 1905 was not an eventful one. Mrs. Burnett had "The Shuttle" still on her mind, but not at the end of her pen. There were, however, other vital ideas, one of which perhaps had its origin in the very dense fog that had closed about her world in the Mersey—"The Dawn of a Tomorrow."

The clearing skies in her own life, and the resurgence of her actually uncrushable faith in people and in good, were reflected in this little book of hope and cheer, and in the favorite phrase of its chief character, "Nothin' ain't ever so bad as wot yer thinks it is." It was not an easy book for her to write, for she was doubtful if the world was ready to accept the mystic, semi-religious message she had to offer. When the story was finished she tried to rewrite it, and

eliminate this idea, delaying for some months sending the script to *Scribner's*, where it was to appear serially. The original version appeared in the December, 1905, and January, 1906, issues of that magazine, and, even beyond her expectations, reached the hearts of readers the world over, demonstrating that she was right in having faith in her inspiration.

The heart of Fluffy had been through much; and perhaps what it had learned can be read, by an understanding mind, in this letter which she wrote to Vivian, suddenly called to his father's death-bed:

MY OWN DARLING BOY: January, 1906.

I have just heard of your trouble.—My whole heart and soul are with you. Try to feel through every moment that your own Mammy is by your side. I know all it must mean to you and I cannot bear to be away from you.

I wish I could have spoken to you before you went away, but Edith did not tell me of your message because I had been in bed all morning, struggling with a feverish cold and a bad, bad headache.

I wish I could have seen you and held you in my arms a few minutes to try to comfort you. Oh, it must be peace now—and if souls do meet each other, who would meet him first but Lionel?

Perhaps he knows all the things I wanted him to know, but could never tell him. Peace be with him—Love be with him—God be with him.

My darling, darling one, I send you all my heart of love and sympathy and understanding of your feeling. When you are alone with him, kiss him once on his cheek for me. He may know what it means.

Your own,

MAMMY.

In April, 1906, she went to Washington to see there the early spring that she always loved; to see also Effie and all the Macfarlanes, and Molly Elliott Seawell, writer friend who had built up a reputation by historical boys' books. She had hopes of finishing "The Shuttle" quite soon, and those hopes were the inspiration of this letter, from Molly Elliott Seawell's home, to Gilder, to whom "The Shuttle" had been so long promised as a serial for *The Century:*

1767 P Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C.
April 6, 1906.

My dear Mr. Gilder:

I am sorry to say that I have only one copy of the first seventeen chapters of "The Shuttle." When I get them typed I will send the manuscript—or typescript—of the whole thing as far as I have gone. In your sainted hands alone would I trust it to be run over with the blue pencil in your eye—(what a hideously uncomfortable place for a blue pencil).

I am afraid it will be hopelessly long for serialization but I do not want it to be. The fact that one can restore everything in the book after the serializing makes it possible to gaze on blue pencils with calmness. Still, I am afraid it won't cut well.—I mean *largely* enough to make it practicable. The leisurely manner of it is the result of the *need* of atmosphere in such a book.

Without chapters about New York typewriter agents, and sharp little New York females working their way to international matches—contrasted with English village people and nobles with Gallows Mounts of their own, it would not be "The Shuttle."

Yours sincerely,
Frances Hodgson Burnett.

She sailed for England on the *Kroonland*, May 12.

The following letter to Vivian, written shortly after she was settled down at Maytham for her summer, touches a characteristic sensitiveness of hers. She abominated being photographed. She said that the moment she knew the exposure was to be made, her most murderous instincts presented themselves, undisguised, in every line of her countenance. So, when proofs arrived, it was always a case of which she detested least. The Munsey picture referred to below was one of a series of small pen reproductions that "illuminated" an article in *Munsey's Magazine* on the literary women of the day.

Maytham Hall, Rolvenden, Kent.
July 28, 1906.

DEAREST BOY:

. . . Never have I seen anything as monstrous as the thing Munsey "drew from" your picture of me—and I have seen monstrous things in my time.

. . . Your photograph was not flattering, but the "drawing" is that of an elderly, battered and drunken Irish cook with a bottle nose and deep cuts in her cheeks. It is a thing so coarse and revolting that it is bad business. I have not a doubt that it has absolutely injured me, and will lower my market value by thousands a year. That it should come out just after the "Dawn" story is too unfortunate. I do you the justice of saying that it insults your photograph as it insults me.

"The Shuttle," after all its bucking and refusal to go ahead, was getting near its close. It was being desperately forced, as this letter to Kitty shows—not without humor glinting through the desperation:

Maytham Hall,
August 19, 1906.

MY OWN KITTY DEAR:

. . . But I have been thinking of nothing but the book, which has not been rushing headlong as sanguine Vivian thinks. It has definitely hung back because it knows it *ought* to be finished by September. It simply holds on to each obstacle it is dragged past and screams and kicks up its heels and tries to dig its toes into the ground at the same time. That is difficult, of course, but it is devil enough to accomplish it. For one thing, you see, it knows it can't have as much room as it wants, because it has to be serialized, and if I gave it all the room it wanted, the Century would be brimming over. But, grinding my teeth, I push it along, holding on to its collar and kicking it on the shin at intervals. What I say is—between me teeth—"You won't, eh? Well, we'll see which of us two is the master." That isn't joy, you know. If the serialization could have been kept from it I dare say it would have given in long ago. But I just let my tongue slip in its presence one day—it always *is* present, you know, and it has behaved like the D—— ever since. Stories are that there 'eadstrong.

Despite its misbehavior, "The Shuttle" was so nearly complete that it was decided to start the serialization in *The Century* for November, 1906. The cutting of it for serial purposes was intrusted, with comfort and confidence, to Editor-and-Friend Gilder. It, of course, came out all right, but even then the story ran several more instalments than *The Century* had planned to allow for it.

Although "The Shuttle" was not entirely off her mind, Mrs. Burnett's attention was turned at this time again toward her old playground, the stage. Asked by several managers to make a dramatization of "The Dawn of a

Tomorrow," she began to think about trying, although she herself was not at all convinced there was a play in the little book.

This brought her to the gloomy, stormy cold days of autumn, when Maytham, with its black-and-white stone-flagged floors and its high-ceilinged rooms, was far from comfortable or cheerful. She had once fled from a Maytham winter to London, but this time events turned her in another direction. Luck also played on her side, for her landlord, Mr. Edwards, was willing to take the house off her hands for the winter.

Her friendship with Lord Ronald Gower had had opportunities to grow, and she had become specially intimate with one of his entourage—a Miss Josephine Browne, and *her* protégé, a young journalist, Frank Hird by name. Lord Ronald spent much of his time travelling, and a plan developed for them all to go to Montreux, on the shores of Lake Geneva, for a month or two of winter sports. In one of her letters written from Montreux she describes Miss Browne as follows:

" . . . She is a dear woman who is a sort of adopted mother of Frank Hird, and is an old friend of his and Lord Ronald's. I never saw a young man and a much older woman have so much fun and enjoyment together as they do. She has white hair and is rather—not very—stout, but she has lived on the edge of Dartmoor all her life when she was not travelling the world over and she is as strong and full of life and energy as if she were eighteen. She is *never* tired. She climbs mountains as if she were the funicular and comes back smiling and glowing to lunch and says, 'Now, what shall we do this afternoon?' She is also the very sweetest and kindest and most dear person one could possibly know."

Among the friendships of later life, this one was important, comforting, and stimulating.

"FAIRY TREE" IN MAYTHAM PARK

The wooded lanes of Maytham were part of its great attraction to Mrs. Burnett. This tree provided a splendid place for fairy-story telling, five trunks rising from one root.

In February Mrs. Burnett was back in Maytham, but making plans to return to America. Vivian was asked to find a place on Long Island, near enough to be a home, or at least a resting-spot for all the "day laborers" in the family. In June she was in the United States again, having waved a rather undecided good-by to Maytham, for her lease there was about to expire, and she was beginning to feel that, despite all its advantages in giving her, under favorable conditions, the life that best suited her working mood, it was an extravagance.

She found herself located in a strange little furnished cottage in the centre of the fashionable Sands Point district of Long Island, with the work before her of dramatizing "The Dawn of a Tomorrow" for Eleanor Robson, who had made a notable success as "Merely Mary Ann," and had hosts of devoted followers all over the country.

She had also agreed to let her name be used as "Editor" of *The Children's Magazine*, a publication in the juvenile field in which Vivian had interested himself.

She began after the passage of months to find the Long Island district attractive to her—albeit in a way distinctly different from the hoary and romantic way of Maytham, and just before departing the next spring for a "cure" at Doctor Lampe's sanitarium, in Frankfort, Germany, she purchased land at Plandome, Long Island, and approved the plans for a house to be built while she was away. The "cure," which was for a form of neuritis, did not prove much of a success, and the late spring found her a visitor at the home of her beloved Josephine Browne, at Tavistock, Dartmoor.

In early December she was back in New York to help rehearse "The Dawn of a Tomorrow," and see its successful first night, January 28, 1909, at the Lyceum Theatre. During the winter she interested herself in Vivian's little magazine, writing for it "The Land of the Blue Flower,"

"The Good Wolf," "Barty Crusoe," and the final numbers of the "Silverbell" series for *St. Nicholas*. In addition to this she had her correspondence, always much of a load upon her because she took seriously her responsibility to those who wrote to her for help or inspiration—and because she felt that she owed it to her friends and herself to keep the contact alive by letters—much the most characteristic product, by the way, of her pen. And then, too, she had the house going up at Plandome, to supervise.

CHAPTER XXVIII

HOME LIFE AT PLANDOME

The experience of building the house she found a mixture of delight and exasperation, which she expressed in her own witty way in the following letter:

Plandome Park, Manhasset, Long Island.
June 29, 1909.

DEARIE ELLA AND DEARIE MADDIE:

There is an —— Stairmaker hammering away about four feet from me. He is one of the occult problems I find myself trying with sweet patience to solve. It is certainly three months—or four—since Vivian first began to search the dictionary for language sufficiently powerful to employ with a view to inducing them to "get a move on." But nothing has transpired. (He is now whistling sweetly some gem from a popular opera.) He comes and spends four or five happy, peaceful hours with us, cheering us by his bright presence and then, having put in one balustrade, I think he goes abroad for a few weeks. He returns, refreshed, and after a joyous day spent with another balustrade, takes to his yacht again. I think he must go in a yacht.

. . . When you come to spend the summer with me in the far off years when the work is completed, you will say the place is lovely, and you will like the house and the terrace and the big piazzas and the view—but let no one speak to me again of the pleasure of building one's own house.

. . . We came in on May 25th, in the mad hope that by doing so we might push the workmen out—but we had not counted with the —— Stairmaker—the —— Terrace layers—the —— Painters, and the —— Builders of the

garage. I could have endured these better if I had not simply revelled in neuritis. I wonder what would happen to me if I had not formed the habit of saying—through clenched teeth—"Things ain't *never* as bad as wot yer *think* they are."

That is one of Glad's most popular speeches. And it is true. This *will* end—and after it is over the lovely Manhasset Bay will still lie smiling at the foot of the lawn and we shall go in the scented evenings down the wide stone steps (which are now being built) down the rose bank to the little curving beach and get into the pretty boat—which I can see from my window as I write—lying like a white dove on the water—and we shall float about, tinkling guitars and things, or merely being quiet, and we shall be sure to say, "How lovely! How adorable!" But in the meantime, let each man, woman and child who loves me at all understand that I do not write because I cannot.

. . . I don't know whether I have told you about the play or not. . . . It settled down to a steady run through the winter. Miss Robson closed in June to go abroad for two months. She reopens "on the road" in September and goes to London in the Spring—that is, if she does not marry August Belmont, whom the papers report engaged to her. . . .

Yours, as always and always,

FLUFFY.

With her moving into the Plandome house she became The Passionate Gardener indeed. The magic of making flowers grow, coaxing them to bloom their best, and bring their happiness into the landscape, became her chief distraction. From this time on she was never thoroughly well, and any real exertion tired her. She had not, in fact, the strength for social activities, and about the most she could

do was to go occasionally to the theatre. But she could always plan her gardens, revel in the future possibilities of bloom, and, in the out-door weather days, spend an hour or more with her gardener, superintending the tucking in of plants and bulbs.

The spring of 1909 was full of the excitement and delight of making lawns, deciding on the direction of paths, the moving in and the planting of hundreds of trees and shrubs. By autumn, a real miracle had been accomplished. The brand-new house stood on its terraces amid green lawns, surrounded by shading trees and thickets of flowering bushes. The "perennial borders" were stuffed with every conceivable "hardy" plant ready to burst forth in the spring—and were even then ablaze with a riot of hardy chrysanthemums.

Mrs. Burnett's pen had been keeping step with her outside work. The people who had bought Maytham (England) had immediately (so she was told) torn down all the ancient brick garden walls, ploughed up the ground and turned to market gardening. This was, as a matter of fact, not so. The new owners proved themselves quite as enthusiastic garden-makers as herself; with greater means at their command, in the course of time making the Maytham gardens among the most beautiful in Kent, itself known as the "garden county of England." Mrs. Burnett's cherished rose-garden was changed, it is true, but transformed into a delphinium-bed of unbelievable size and beauty. But Mrs. Burnett never revisited the district, and was to carry with her always the picture of her rose-garden reduced to rows of cabbages and turnips and lettuces under "cloches." Out of her regretful feeling about her rose-garden grew one of her best-beloved books, "The Secret Garden." It came along naturally for older juveniles, as an expression of her love for growing things, and her desire to tell the world to

"be happy." It struck a note of love for the outdoors and the health-giving power of happy thoughts that was enthusiastically welcomed.

The house at Plandome was as satisfactory to her as any newly built home could be. It was semi-classic in design, and stood, like a simple, red-roofed Italian villa, looking off over its balustraded terrace and green lawns, across a bay often as blue as the waters about Capri, and often gorgeous with the reflected tints of summer sunsets. On the balustraded tops of its octagonal side porches (which she later made into enclosed flower-rooms) she loved to sit, after dinner, with her guests, and watch the glowing skies, until the dark came and made a sort of fairy-land out of the bay, with its hundreds of boats at anchor, swinging their tiny lights; or until the moon came up to give the bay a misty, silvery sheen, for the ghostly whiteness of the little boats to float upon.

It was a house of many windows, much sunshine, and plenty of air. The simplicity of its interior design carried considerable dignity. The main hall was broad, with a white balustraded staircase running backward to a balconied landing over the entrance-door. A high casement doorway at the hall's farther end, gave the visitor a view of the beautiful bay vista, as a welcome, the moment the front door opened for him. To the left was a high-ceilinged living-room, airy and large, with a broad-breasted fireplace of simple Italian design at one end, and a casement door at the other. In this room Mrs. Burnett assembled all the choice antique pieces she had gathered in her Maytham days, old and worm-holed chairs, carved cupboards and chests, some dating from the time of Elizabeth, others Jacobean. And with these she mixed deeply upholstered lounges and chairs so that, despite antiquities, her guests should always be comfortable. The waxed floors were

"FAIRSEAT," OR MAYTHAM, AT PLANDOME, LONG ISLAND

The late Mrs. Barnett had on the shores of Manhasset Bay, Long Island, in 1909. She continued her gardening enthusiasm there with the assistance of all her family, including her granddaughters. The elder, Verity, is shown here with her.

strewn with bright-colored oriental rugs, and on the walls hung landscapes, many by her old Washington friend, Max Weil; bright-colored paintings of Venice, or other European scenes; the fine Turkish head painted for her by Waltman; a portrait of her beloved Kitty Hall, painted by the latter's sister, Gigi; and particularly the full-sized portraits of Vivian and Lionel, painted by S. Jerome Uhl. That of Lionel was actually in the music-room that led off from the living-room by broad sliding doors, but on the wall facing so that it seemed a part of the living-room.

Across the hall, big sliding doors of mahogany opened into the dining-room, with its imposing mantelpiece of light walnut. During her visits to Italy Mrs. Burnett had gathered together a great deal of Renaissance carved furniture. There were tables in deep-brown wood, decorated with high-relief figures, faces, and garlands. There were tall glass-windowed cabinets, and there were sideboards. The chairs were stalwart, and carved. There were benches (casa banca), too, of the same style. In the dining-room, which was high-ceilinged and more than average size, most of this Italian furniture was gathered, giving it something of the Old World atmosphere that Mrs. Burnett found in homes abroad, and which was so congenial to her. In one of the glass-door cabinets stood on display the elaborate set of table glass Mrs. Burnett had had made for her in Venice by Salviati. In the others were ranged the china used on special occasions.

The plan of the house provided on the second floor two rooms as wings, which had light on three sides. In the centre of the second floor was a large hall, originally intended to be a "den," but it was soon discovered that the chief requisite of a "den" was *four* walls, and seclusion from the household noises. So, although her big oak working-desk and her big armchair were set in this hall, Mrs. Bur-

nett rarely wrote there. A porch on the first floor was made into a sun-room, and a less pretentious table provided there.

For a while the sun-room sufficed, but there was still too much noise from the work of the household, and visitors brought into the living-room cut off her escape to the upstairs. So another place had to be found, and the sunny south wing on the second floor eventually became the permanent writing headquarters.

From the windows here as she wrote, Mrs. Burnett could see water on three sides of her, and below spread out the expanse of her lawns and borders. She was, so to speak, in the tree-tops, and could write with their green leaves shimmering about her, and with her very latest roses, snapdragons, dahlias, marigolds, or chrysanthemums, according to the season, blossoming right under her eye.

Her bedroom was at the north end of the house, with two large windows facing the bay. It was spacious, and made cosey by a fireplace. The bed was a big four-poster, with draperies to match the curtains of the room. There was a small writing-desk by the window, and a couch there, too, in which she often lay for a resting-period during an afternoon, or while convalescing from some attack of illness, and watched the boats darting about on the bay, or the gathering sunsets. The feature of the room was the fine old Marquetry suite, armoire, chiffonier, dressing-table, corner cupboard, chairs, etc. This she had picked up during a trip in Holland, and prized very highly. Her dressing-table was simply furnished with a few silver or ivory things that had from time to time been given to her by her friends or members of her family as Christmas gifts.

Mrs. Burnett was never much given to wearing jewelry, and what she did wear was put on for its romantic or affectionate values, not for ornament—as, for example, a

moonstone ring from a friend to bring her good luck—or some pin Vivian or Edith had given her for a Christmas present. Dress, however, was her great "indoor sport." It was the thing that most diverted her, and a subject to which she could turn with zest from almost any situation, topic, or person. She spent time on clothes rather than money, and every important event was, inevitably, at some stage interpreted from the angle of clothes. Dresses were to her always part of the fitness and the drama of the situation. Her taste was not for showy things, but she liked decoration. Conforming to the fashions of her later years, however, her dresses were simpler, depending more on proportion and richness of materials for their effect.

Mrs. Burnett's habit of life was largely formed by her lifelong semi-invalidism, which meant breakfasting in bed and spending many whole days there. And her bedcovers were always littered with books. She was an inveterate reader. Her mainstay was fiction—first, because she wanted to be in the land of make-believe as often and as long as possible, and, second, because to keep up with what other writers were doing was a sort of necessity. She read the Bible, too, long and often, and had the special verses which she liked marked and the pages dog-eared. From books on history or science she could get thrills and revelations not vouchsafed to more sophisticated readers. "The First Knife in the World," a story she wrote for *St. Nicholas*, came from a momentary dip into a book on ancient Britain, and "The Lost Prince" was the result of a brief talk with the Princess Hreblianovich Lazarowich, her old friend, Eleanor Calhoun, over the history of Serbia.

Whenever it was possible to rise from her bed, and her mind was in a condition to work, Mrs. Burnett tried to be at her writing-table by ten o'clock, with the idea of staying there, without interruption, until one o'clock, the usual

time for the family lunch. She did not, however, permit the mere matter of pain, or the necessity of being in bed, to limit her working-days. She learned to write lying almost flat on her back, and the large proportion of the manuscript of later books written in lead-pencil, is proof of how much and how constantly she worked under these difficulties—metaphorically, if not actually, with teeth clenched.

When she could write at a desk she went into the sunny little south-wing room. As soon as she found it really the place for her to do her work in, she had it decorated in Chinese style, with golden yellow hangings; gold and black brocade upholsterings; Chinese picture lacquerings on the chairs and tables, and oriental pictures on the walls. A gold Buddha stood on a Chinese stand in one corner, and a big cabinet of delicately carved teak-wood, bought at Liberty's in early years, against the opposite wall, served as a bookcase. A big, comfortable couch with many pillows was set into one corner; and several deep upholstered chairs, to give the air of cosiness and luxury she always asked for, completed the furnishings of her workroom.

The sun looked over her shoulder, through a big, French casement window, as she began her work in the morning, and spread its rays upon the paper before her through the side window by the time she came to the end of her morning stint.

Sister Edith always took care that Mrs. Burnett's house set a "good table." But this hardly ever meant much to Fluffy, since for one reason or another she was most of the time restricted in what she ate, or had a set diet to which she must conform, regardless of what the menu might be for others. An almost invariable part of her meal was a glass of buttermilk, with toast. Whatever she did allow herself from the menu, it could not very often be said that she "ate heartily." And yet she was never thin; in fact, she

had, for the most part of her life, an inclination to plumpness, which was supposed to be connected with troubles she had with her heart and was cause for dieting.

After a midday meal the family and guests usually went into the living-room, found comfortable places, and smoked. In the early years of her marriage, during her first attack of nervous prostration, she had been recommended cigarette-smoking to relieve neuralgia. She continued to be a moderate cigarette-smoker all her life, and carried with the habit a little individual practice of nibbling a piece of cream-peppermint candy as she puffed—a procedure that always amused (or astounded) masculine smokers when they witnessed it.

The afternoons were usually spent largely in little works about the garden, possibly in a motor ride through the roads and lanes of the north shore of Long Island, if the guests felt so inclined; and then a foregathering for tea. If in summer, tea was served under a shade tree on the lawn at the side of the house, on a bit of property that Mrs. Burnett was obliged to buy to protect herself from a house being built too near her own.

Sister Edith presided over the tea-service, a golden Benares one, and Fluffy talked. These were among the cheerfulest hours of the year. Friends from the country around came, usually bringing their house-guests; and, depending upon the character of the assemblage, conversation ranged from cures for rose-bugs and the difficulty of getting well-rotted manure, to welt-politik and the latest book or play. In the sunshine and among her beloved flowers Mrs. Burnett was at her best: gay, witty, reminiscent, joy-believing, and joy-giving.

The character of Mrs. Burnett's conversation was unique, and bore no resemblance to the typical "literary conversation" found in books. Its brilliancy, its culture, its literary

qualities arose from the fact that it was the unconscious and joyous effervescence of an imagination that was seeing, noting, absorbing, comparing things in an individual manner; from the fact that it was taking a huge interest in things in a broad and romantic way, and eagerly paid the listener the compliment of assuming that he or she was interested in life with a similar intensity. Literary allusion, quotations from classics, the usual paraphernalia of the standard variety of erudition, were not in the flavor of her talk. She roamed widely in her references to books and art, when she found such things in the line of her subject. She knew much of the world, even before she had travelled, and in later years had seen a good share of that part of it worth seeing, and many of the people on it worth knowing. And so, whatever she said, was spoken with that background of internationalism which must always be one of the earmarks of a cultured conversation. But it was her own live contact with people and places that was the real well-spring of her talk—that eager, searching Romantick Lady part of her, voyaging about the world, seeing people and situations, and getting at the romantic kernel of them, the humor and the pathos of them, and spreading these before listeners with a gaiety of spirit, an aptness of phrase and an understanding of the sentiment, which actually glorified them. In conversation she was even more the story-teller than when with pen in hand.

Those who remember her conversation remember only the glow of it, not the detail. Poultney Bigelow, himself a conversationalist and raconteur of international experience, spent a summer or two in Kent, as Mrs. Burnett's next-door neighbor, so to speak, and was with her at all times and at all hours in a most informal way. He wrote, on being asked for some concrete recollection of his talks with her:

Bigelow Homestead,
Malden-on-Hudson, New York.
June 4, 1925.

. . . Your mother was a *bunch* of bubbling wit and creativeness—she curled up of an evening in her sofa corner and would spin yarns rich in imagination, and love of human kind. It was as tho some heavenly sprite had floated in upon us and was showering unmerited joys for our special edification.

But who could seize and write out that cascade of intellectual scintillation! Perhaps she would not have talked so freely had she suspected a reporter in concealment!

One feature of her talking impressed me in particular—never did I hear her speak unkindly of rival writers—of unfair critics—even of publishers! If that be not saintly, then am I a poor judge in those matters—yet always

Faithfully yours,

POULTNEY BIGELOW.

On week-days the tea was not an elaborate function, but on Sundays (and often on Saturdays) when the house was full of guests, it became a much more important affair.

There were very few Sundays when children were not of the group about the tea-table indoors or outdoors, and nothing pleased her more than to have little people come. In one of the ancient cupboards in the living-room, which had wide-opening doors reaching to the ground, she had constructed, with great glee and cunning, a doll's house. There was an upper floor, with bedroom and parlor, and a lower floor with dining-room and kitchen. Adding quaint little items of detail to the perfection of this doll's house gave her great joy—and when she returned from a shopping trip to New York with something that could be put among its furnishings, it was a day of jubilation. Grand pianos,

carpet-sweepers, shower-baths, all the modern comforts of home were eventually crowded into the four little rooms; and not the least of the treasures was a full set of servants, —butler, cook, housemaids, etc.—all in correct costume. Nothing delighted her so much as kneeling down upon cushions with her little visitors before this cupboard, so that she could herself explain all the marvels, and see the wonder and delight grow in their faces. Only her sense of her duties to the adult guests in the house would prevent her playing in this way for hours. She would laughingly admit the accusation, when she was told that she had the doll's house quite as much for herself as for the youngsters. And, of course, in due time she wrote and published a little story about it.

Dinners were informal, for there were so many "working men" in the household, and she was usually successful, before the meal was through, in finding out what the laborers had been doing, and in saying just the right thing to rouse any flagging hopes, and to spur on endeavor.

Her method of getting results from people was by praise. This was a definitely thought-out philosophy of action with her, based on the conviction that people were trying always to do their best, and that, knowing their own shortcomings better than any one else could, they did not need to be scolded or dragooned into greater endeavor. If ever she had a real criticism of any one, she reserved it for the most secret of secret confabs.

Evenings were usually short in her household, because she never slept well, and retired early to make the most of the night. But once in a while, during the smoking-hour after dinner, she would tell something of what she had been writing during the morning, and suggest: "Shall I read it to you?" She would bring the manuscript herself from her workroom—two or three chapters perhaps—and settle her-

self in a corner near the fireplace. It made an effective picture—a little lady in a very large and thickly upholstered chair, semicircular, covered with bright-flowered cretonne, and rising almost to her shoulders, a shaded electric light just over her shoulder, a gilt-and-glass cabinet full of colorful knicknacks at her elbow, above her, in the shadow, a bright-colored portrait of an Arab chief, and, usually, a fire glowing between bright brass andirons.

The little lady fingers over the pages of her manuscript with a kind of mystified solicitude, almost as if she does not know quite how they should be arranged, and, after a little while, seems to decide just where she wishes to begin. She sits up very straight in the depths of her chair, holds the selected chapter of manuscript out before her at a little more than the ordinary distance, with her left hand, and lifts her gold-and-turquoise lorgnette. As she adjusts it along the bridge of her finely cut, though rather large, aquiline nose, she straightens her head and neck as if bringing the page into better focus, and then, softly but with a queer little suggestion of decision and firmness, clears her throat.

That starts the magic journey, and she reads absorbedly, smoothly, intensely, dramatically, making her voice a part of the picture, and letting no phrase, remark or description lose a shade of its effectiveness. She seems to have something of the spirit of the troubadour, the bard, the Minnesinger, unconsciously casting herself in each part, but never conceitedly or self-importantly. For always, and with particular conviction in the latter years, she felt that she was not the creator, only the doer, the channel. Under such reading the power of the work had its fullest revelation. No eye could ever get from the printed page a half of what her reading gave.

Even more precious, as more infrequent, would be the

evenings when she might choose to tell of some idea for a character or story which had come to her. This viva-voce unfolding of a story to be, had in it elements of magic and mystery that no one who ever participated in it would be likely to forget. And not the least strange part of it all would be the fact that, when he read the finished story, he would realize how complete the revelation had been to the story-teller in the very first instance—the idea had left its full impress at the first impact. To hear the eagerness in her voice, and the note of gay discovery, or surprise, as each point of the tale unfolded itself to her mind, was to be let into the very inner sanctum of creation, and to realize how absolutely true was her conviction that she was always in the hands of an outside power, and merely the custodian, the responsible steward, of a divine gift.

CHAPTER XXIX

TRAVEL, AND A MOST LOVABLE CHARACTER

Even the fascinations of a new house and garden were not quite able to subdue Mrs. Burnett's hunger for England, its atmosphere and her friends there. And as there were good business reasons for a trip across the Atlantic, she made it early in 1910. Gertrude Elliott, the handsome and talented sister of the talented and handsome Maxine Elliott, had got backing for a London production of "The Dawn of a Tomorrow," and Mrs. Burnett wished to be in London to supervise the rehearsals.

Eleanor Robson had obtained Mrs. Burnett's promise that she should have the English rights, but an accident had intervened, one of a kind Mrs. Burnett was by this time getting quite used to. Miss Robson *had* married the millionaire, August Belmont, and that had, of course, considerably altered her plans. In a letter to Maddie and Ella Hepworth-Dixon, written just before sailing, Mrs. Burnett quaintly expressed herself:

"Far be it from me, however, to suggest that any girl should not marry a nice millionaire. I 'ave not a 'art of stone, even though my play is stopped at the height of its career and I lose a couple of hundred pounds a week."

Hilda Trevelyan, successful London star, had been refused the play because of its previous engagement to Miss Robson, before connections were made with Miss Elliott. All this shifting about and delay seemed to begin a run of ill luck for the play. It started off well, but very promptly met a misfortune of a type with which she was again familiar. The story is told in a letter to her old Washington friend, Effie MacFarlane:

Garlant's Hotel,
Suffolk Street, Pall Mall, London.

DARLING EFFIE:

I have just returned from seeing the King's funeral and as the afternoon is free I must write to you while I can. We leave for the Dolomites on Monday morning. Lord Ronald and Frank Hird and Josephine left for Lake Garda this afternoon. Lake Garda is a heavenly lake between Milan and Venice, and the Dolomites are a short journey from there.

. . . You can have no idea of what the effect of the King's death has been. The whole country is wearing mourning more or less, but in London every creature—working classes and all—has been plunged into black. There has not been a touch of color to be seen in the streets since the day of the death.

. . . "The Dawn" had been produced with immense success and was crowding the houses in Liverpool—everything sold out—when the King's death was announced and the theatre was closed at once.

. . . I went from last Saturday until Tuesday to Hammerfield [Lord Ronald Gower's place] and it was heavenly beautiful, but everyone was in deep blackness and poor Lord Ronald was very much depressed. He was not really fond of the King, but you know they were boys together and I think the funereal atmosphere has been bad for him.

. . . I know how glad you will be to hear that Dr. [Carmelia] Walker's [osteopath] treatment has not lost its effect at all, and that the London osteopathist is continuing her work with perfect success. I am a new creature—thank God! thank God! I was up at five this morning—watched the procession and waited for it—for several hours, and yet I could sit down and write this long letter as soon as I had finished lunch. It is so wonderful not to be tired and in pain every hour!

I must also tell you that Gertrude Elliott makes in many ways a more *moving* "Glad" than Miss Robson. Audiences thunder applause at her.

Edith sends her love to you all with mine—darling Effie.

Your

FLUFFY.

As she had expressed herself some years previous in a letter to Kitty, she felt she "must have some Alps," and this time she had chosen the less familiar Dolomite and Tyrolese region. The spirit of the journey with the friends she loved so well, is vividly given in the two following letters to Vivian:

Hotel Zur Post, Partenkirchen,
June 12, 1910.

DEAREST VIVIAN:

I am not quite sure of my date, but this is Sunday and I am at Partenkirchen, about two hours drive from Oberammergau, where Josephine and Edith went yesterday. Since seven o'clock this morning they have been watching the Passion Play—with one hour's recess for dinner—and they are looking on it now 5:10, and will be, I believe, until six. I hope it will not kill Edith. Nothing would kill Josephine —who has the strength of a giant.

We left heavenly Cortina on Thursday, and drove to Toblach through the Ampezzo Tal again—stopping midway to rest the horses while we lunched on the grass amongst flowers on a hill side. We spent the night at Toblach and then went by train to Innsbruck the next day. We spent the night there and left by carriage on Friday morning. We rested and lunched at a wonderful mountain village called Zirl—rested again and had tea at Zaufelt and then drove on two or three hours more to Mittenwald, where we spent the night.

Each day seems more entrancing than the last—each

valley more amazingly beautiful—the everlasting mountains more unspeakably magnificent. We all feel that we have seen all the beauty of the world—at least that there can be no more to cry out and try to find words to express.

. . . One of the delights of our journey has been that all the villages and all the people we have seen have been so typically Tyrolean. At Mittenwald, tiny babies of two or three say "Gruss Gott" to you as you pass. Everybody says it. It is so sweet and friendly.

. . . We reach London about June 22nd, and then plan for sailing. Love to you.

With all my heart,

MAMMY.

Linderhof, June 15, 1910.
(Oberammergau)

DEAREST VIVIAN:

I sent you a postal yesterday to tell you that tremendous rains were detaining us here. We thought then that perhaps the trouble would be over today, but the rain has never ceased for a moment and is pouring down now in such torrents as I suppose one only sees in Alpine valleys such as this.

Yesterday was really exciting. We could not believe that things were as bad as they seemed, but hour by hour we began to find that they were worse.

Just after we arrived on Monday evening, *forty* poor things from Oberammergau arrived in various vehicles. They were Germans of the poorer class and we cannot imagine where they have been put. Most of them are, of course, in the house and we can hear them excitedly talking and see them sending out scouts to look at the roads.

. . . If I had taken notes all yesterday they would have been quite thrilling. Emilie has her meals downstairs and can speak German, so she brings us bulletins at intervals.

She says that the luckless forty are furious and suspect the Fursthaus people of trying to keep us all here. Emilie herself is furious and suspects our coachman of being in the pay of the proprietors—but as even the scouts of the Forty, on going to see the roads, find them absolutely impassable, I do not see what one can say or do.

Our journey back to Innsbruck by King Ludwig's mad castles cannot possibly be made. The road on that side has had a piece swept away, and huge trees lie across it. It will take the foresters three weeks to mend it, even after the rains have ceased. Our next chance of escape would be by going back to Oberammergau and taking the train there for Munich—but this morning we hear that the Oberammergau road is unnavigable—and—worse still—that the railroad, which is a small, single line for some distance, has been rendered unsafe and cannot be used. I would not *drive* back from Oberammergau by the way we came for worlds.

Things were not so bad as reported, and the party suffered only a short delay.

Midsummer saw her back in her garden at Plandome. "The Secret Garden" had been finished, and was about to start its serial run in the new *American Magazine*, edited by her long-time friend, and particularly Kitty Hall's friend, John S. Phillips.

She wrote an uncannily understanding little tale of her friendship with a bird at English Maytham, "My Robin," which brought a most surprising response from readers everywhere; and then plunged into a long novel, which proved a great joy in the writing, and a greater joy after it was published. This was "T. Tembarom."

The character of the typewriter salesman in "The Shuttle" had made an outstanding success, almost as great

as Bettina herself. This character had been, in a way, drawn from life. Archie Fahnestock (sister Edith's eldest son) had had a brief experience as a typewriter salesman. He had gone at the job with his usual effervescing enthusiasm, and, as he was most of the time living in the house, or near by, there had been much talk of the typewriter selling-game, the kind of men in it, and how they did their work. The slangy, breezy, casual and yet often desperate atmosphere surrounding the business naturally soon crystallized in her mind as a factor of romance, and quite as quickly found its place in the book she then had in hand, "The Shuttle."

People loved "G. Selden," and wanted more of him. She loved him herself, and decided to find out more about him by the simple method of making him the hero of a book. As she did not actually take over Selden out of the plot of "The Shuttle," but originated a new plot for the new book, it was deemed wiser to use a new name; so the chief character was called "T. Tembarom," and became, after "Fauntleroy," perhaps her most beloved character, because of his humor, his genuineness, and his sweetness.

There were some disadvantages to wintering at Plandome. At first she gave herself relief and variety by spending days and weeks in New York, at well-chosen hotels. But, as a matter of fact, what she wanted was to get entirely away from the changeable and exasperating New York winter. When she heard some friends who had been to Bermuda the previous winter, sing its praises, she decided that that little, quiet, half-old-world spot in mid-Atlantic was just the place for her; so she sailed on March 2, 1911.

The stay was not long, most of the time being spent at the Princess Hotel, but she saw, in the few weeks she was there, enough of the restful, colorful beauty of the place, and the quiet charm of the people, to make her feel that

she had found a winter refuge. So she picked out a little cottage on the side of the road to St. Georges, at Bailey's Bay, and set her plans to make a home and a garden there for herself. This was "Clifton Heights," perched on the top of a quite steep slope, looking out over cedars and from amongst them, and commanding a lovely view of the water. Almost, as it seemed, under the door-step, in the close-to-shore channel, the big steamers came and went to America, and in the view the ocean made its most marvellous changes from green to bottomless, amethystine blue. The little cottage had the simplest kind of an excuse for a garden, but the grounds and the climate offered endless opportunities for a garden-maker with imagination, and a not too slim purse. The house itself was unpretentious, but could be made comfortable, and she saw possibilities of addition, which she later took advantage of. In the trees the red birds, and a host of other less showy kinds, darted about, and altogether it seemed to her to be a kind of glittering little fairy chalet, in which all sorts of wonders could be done, and unlimited peace and happiness attained.

By May of 1911 Mrs. Burnett was back in Plandome and her garden. From this time on her gardening was so consuming a part of her life that it almost became one of the chief characters in the play. She spent limitless time and, for her, limitless money on this pet avocation of hers, and her letters to every one are filled with accounts of her gardening successes—or difficulties. There was little to the summer of 1911 but the building of her Plandome garden —tragically interrupted by the death, in an automobile accident, of sister Edith's husband, Uncle Frank Jordan. This sorrow, of course, bound the sisters closer together, and they were glad to take refuge in the little haven they had prepared in Bermuda. She wrote to Ella Dixon about Bermuda:

". . . Clifton Heights, which is my house, is a snow white coral bungalow, and I bought the white wicker and cretonney bridal furniture of a young one year married Captain Joyner, who was ordered back to Dover, and was going with tears of rage. That is how you get your furniture in Bermuda—if you do not import it at enormous cost.

"There is a garrison and a Government House and when reluctant officials and warriors are moved, they make tear blotted lists of their belongings, and you go and prowl about their houses like a vulture and carry things off in your claws. But your Fluffy was her softest and most coaxingly apologetic for the indelicacy of the intrusion. And she did not buy things in bits, or object to prices. She went into the little drawing room and said, 'Oh! how pretty. May I have all of this?' and into the dining room and beamed with appreciation and said, 'I should like all this. It is so exactly what I want,'—in fact, it was the greatest luck for me, as well as convenient for Captain Joyner.

". . . So Edith and I are going to have our favorite joy of 'making' a house.—And it is such a pretty dear, with a lily field enclosed with oleanders on its left side, and a banana field on the right of its sloping hill side garden—and a heavenly view through palms and cedars of a sea of such colors as one only dreams of. And at the lower part of the sea garden—shielded by a white coral wall—are to grow the six hundred and seventy two roses blooming in one's face when New York is seventy degrees below zero, and London is black with fog or slopped with mud and rain. And on all this island there is not a motor or a train, or a smoking, rattling thing.

"And the Governor, Sir Walter Kitchener—Lord Kitchener's brother—is a dear, who takes you to see his princely chickens in palatial coops taken care of by the Army when it is not busy playing soldiers in the roads in preparation

MAYTHAM HALL

Mrs. Burnett's English home from 1898 to 1907.

CLIFTON HEIGHTS

Mrs. Burnett's "snow-white bungalow" at Bailey's Bay, Bermuda.

for the time when rampant Empires will attack little white coral and pink oleander trimmed Bermuda.

"An army of fierce lambs, supported by a navy of blood thirsty canaries, would sweep it off the face of the turquoise blue sea, and remove it forever as a danger to the peace of nations.

". . . Dear Mark Twain loved Bermuda, and went there year after year. William Dean Howells goes now with his charming daughter, Mildred. He has a delightful article on the Islands in the Christmas number of *Harper's Magazine* which I am sending to you, so that you will know where I am. . . ."

Gardening, as can be seen, went on just as passionately in Bermuda—and was taken up with undiminished fervor again in the 1912 summer when she returned to Plandome. Gardening activities were, however, relieved by work on the dramatization of "Racketty Packetty House," perhaps the most successful of the "Queen Silverbell" stories. This play was wanted to open the new Children's Theatre on the top of the great Century Theatre, just erected by a group of New York millionaires interested in furthering the progress of "the stage." The play was produced with great success at Christmas-time—and after she had characteristically given a Christmas-tree to all the cast, she was free to go to her beloved Bermuda again. The winter's stay in the ocean isle was uneventful. Her only work was the reading of the proofs of "T. Tembaron," which began in the January, 1913, *Century*.

Again, however, she was beset with a longing for "some Alps," and, taking Gigi and Kitty Hall with her, in May, 1913, she sailed for Trieste, with the idea of a "Wanderjahre," which should take her, without plan or purpose, through the Tyrolese Alps. On the boat over she met Miss

Elizabeth Jordan, then connected with *Harper's Bazaar*, whom she described in a letter as "very delightful and likable."

The friendship begun on this boat with Miss Jordan became one of the most stimulating associations of her latter years. She found much to admire in Miss Jordan's strong and capable attitude toward life, much to love in her ready appreciation and sympathy, and got much inspiration for her work from contact with a creative mind that was of a different type, yet had fine understanding and analytical powers.

What she was getting out of this travel in Germanic lands is indicated by this letter to Ella Dixon:

Hotel Imperial, Wien,
October 12, 1913.

DEARIE ELLA:

As I have been wandering about in Austria since I landed in Trieste August 12, and as I never know "which minit's gwine to be de nex" (as Uncle Remus says) all my letters are addressed to my Bank—The London and South Western, 27 Regent Street—and are forwarded to me when I perch long enough upon any bough whatsoever.

. . . Having made *every* body comfortable and happy on Long Island, and having performed *every* duty, and having also grown quite tired, I gathered Kitty and Gigi Hall together, and, with a most comfortable little maid in attendance, set out to do and to go where—where I hanged pleased—without let, hindrance or limit. To live in the best suite of rooms in the best hotels in any part of Europe being strict economy in comparison to living at Plandome Park, Long Island—and as one can spend an occasional morning at home and lightly earn one's living as one goes—with the aid of a pen and ink and a few cheap sheets of paper—one need not accuse oneself of extravagance.

. . . I am in Vienna now because, though all three of us have been many times in most cities, *none* of us had been to Vienna.

. . . Kitty and Gigi, who played in their cradles with nearly *all* the pictures in the world, go about quite drunk with joy, and reel in and out of galleries—and out and in—and my only grief is that—as I was ptomaine poisoned on the steamer and spent my first month in getting well—I am not yet strong enough to stand on my feet twenty four hours of the day, so I cannot go with them always.

. . . Vienna *is* beautiful and splendid, with majestic spaces, and the galleries are full of wonders, but—I don't *love* cities, Ella—I *don't love* them—I want my mountains every hour.

I have been living with Alps piercing the heavens, and have been watching the clouds wreathing round their heads or shoulders, or creeping down their sides and swathing their feet and changing every fifteen minutes, and *always* into some mysterious thing more lovely still than before—I have been doing it unceasingly since the middle of August and I have been wild with the unspeakable beauty of this world—and cities seem—not enough. . . .

Yours, as always,

FLUFFY.

While she was in the midst of her joyous voyaging through mediæval Europe, she sent this letter to sister Edith:

Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten,
München.

Private Business

DEAREST:

I am not going to ask you any questions. It will only do you harm to try to recall and write details. I feel this as a shock—an indescribable *shock!*

Unless you had evidence of *your own* and provided by your own *feeling*, I should actually hesitate to place confidence—if I were you—in information which *originally* came from another person.—Things might have been distorted and deliberately or even unconsciously misinterpreted. . . . But if your *own feeling* has told you something was wrong I know it can be relied on and I have encountered one of the bitterest illusions of my life.

But for *you*—absolutely but for *you* the house never would have been there. I gave money I wanted for myself and Vivian. . . .

You need not write a word. I am so glad and proud that you can so courageously cast things aside. It is the only way.

The year 1914 has begun and the rest is done with. Go to Bermuda the minute you want to and are ready and I will follow you. I am sure the Clays would adore having you as a paying guest, and Solomon Francis [the negro gardener] would stand upon his head with joy.

Do you know what I believe? I believe Frank came and told me that you were unhappy. You see there was no reason why I should have felt it myself. I was sure I had left everything safe for you and that you would really have all you liked best—a darling room of your own in a darling house with the children who delighted in you and whom you had such fun with. And suddenly one day something said to me, "She is not happy. She feels lonely. She misses Frank and you too much. That place is not the place for her just now, at least." I thought perhaps the long winter days were too dreary—I never dreamed of anything else being possible. So I wrote and tried to make you feel that Fluffy was with you and you could go wherever you chose. I could not bear the thought of your being lonely or sad. It was darling Frank who came.

I am so glad Ernest is such a dear. God bless him. Tell him I trust you to him.

Your

FLUFFY.

The ties between the two sisters had always been very close, and sister Frances felt very keenly that Edith had had more than her fair share of knocks from Fate—and strove to protect her, whenever possible, from further buffetings. Being seized with an unexplainable presentment that all was not well at Plandome, she wrote a comforting letter, and later to Edith's guarded reply sent the one given above.

It touches on one of the serious tragedies of her later intimate life—a family disagreement—precipitated by a distressingly perverse turn in one of her most treasured fairy-stories. It led to a long period of heartache and worry, and the final result was a bitter disillusionment that involved some of her oldest and most cherished friendships. The affair was a version of the mother-in-law situation, but complicated and heightened to the *n*th degree by the fact that a Romantic Lady was one of the dramatis personæ, dealing with people and things according to imagination's formulas. It originated in the "little house" that Annie and Archie had built—to which she had contributed a quite "Romantick Lady" check, largely because of her interest in sister Edith, and believing that the "little house" and its owners would provide a loving refuge for sister Edith when she should be no more. Edith did go to live there while Frances was travelling, but after a few months of happy home-making with her youngsters, she found herself involved in a new variation of the age-old family problem. Convinced that she was not wanted, and broken-hearted, she took refuge in the big Plandome house, staying there until shortly after receiving the above letter, and then going to such comfort among the family friends as the letter sug-

gests. This was only the first phase of the story—for, after the family had been seemingly reunited, the summer following, the old sore was reopened. There was serious illness in the little house in the fall, and both Edith and Fluffy did their best to alleviate the situation. There was misunderstanding—and the writing of letters—among them one in which Frances in strong terms defended Edith against what she considered unjust and uncalled-for accusations. After the passage of a few months, Mrs. Burnett found herself the defendant in a $50,000 suit for libel, in which Annie was the complainant, based on her letter in defense of her sister. Mrs. Burnett was by nature extremely sensitive to publicity of any kind, and the thought of being haled to court on proceedings of this nature horrified her. But she had the blood of Cadraad Haard in her veins, and in this case it brought to the surface all the fight she had in her.

When the case first came to trial she was not asked to testify. The judge dismissed the complaint after hearing only the plaintiff's side. This proved an unfortunate move, however, since it resulted in an appeal and a reversal. A final trial resulted in Mrs. Burnett's favor. But this all meant a sort of sword of Damocles hanging over her head for a long period, and the disturbed state of mind it brought about had a bad effect upon both her writing and her health. In a letter to Josephine Browne we get a good picture of her mental disquiet.

Plandome Park, November 21, 1917.

JOSEPHINE, MY DARLING:

. . . The appalling Case came off about a month ago and was dismissed from the Court by the Judge. . . . You can imagine our relief—*but*—if you please—they have taken it to another Court; "made an appeal," it is called, and it

will be submitted to yet another Judge—not by trial but by giving to him for inspection copies of all the evidence. If he sustains the decision of the first Judge I think that is the end, but if he reverses his decision they can bring the whole thing into court again.

It is too horrible. After just a few weeks of relief and peace to have that Monster start to life again is almost more than one can endure. At the first trial I was not even called to the witness stand, neither were any of my witnesses.

A letter to Elizabeth Jordan, written during the mid-Europe wanderings, is in a more cheerful vein:

Grand Hotel de l'Europe, Salzburg.
January 9, 1914.

DEAR ELIZABETH JORDAN:

. . . Rotherberg is a mediæval dream which has remained alive in the daylight. You stand and gaze and say, "How can it be?" It cannot—in the 20th Century—but it is! Have you seen it? If not, dear Elizabeth, gird up your loins next summer and go to it without an hour's delay. Go to Eisen Hut Hotel, which is an old "patrician house" a thousand years old—perhaps more. Go also, taking my name with you—to see Mr. Arthur Wasse, who is an English artist, and a Manchester man with a Manchester accent, and who, twenty five years ago, actually got possession of a small "Defense Tower" *on the walls* and turned it into a little house and has lived there and painted pictures ever since—and how could he help himself?

We were driving about in the rain and I saw this wonderful little house on the ancient wall, and saw that below it was a darling, little drenched box-bordered garden—and could not believe that such a thing was really true and *could* be lived in by a happy, human being, and on questioning our driver he told us that an English artist actually

lived and breathed and had his being in that place. I almost wept aloud with joy. And I—who *never* go to see strange people, said, "Oh, I *want* to see the pictures of a man who had the sense to make a house of that place and live in it." And I could not rid myself of the thought and when we returned to the hotel I talked to my own private waiter and found that Mr. Wasse often came to the house. And I sent a card asking him if we might come to see him. And the dear thing asked us to tea—and we went—and he was a cosy, homely Manchester dear—and we had a heavenly visit and "foregathered" and talked Manchester and Lancashire to each other.

The house was incredibly lovable, and he had wonderful tiny rooms and corners, and had created a studio and tucked on balconies undreamed of ways, and had a view which must have done something to his soul every time he looked at it.

Just to show her that she did not travel for nothing, out of this Tyrol and south Germany voyaging, her demon created for her a new story, a fact which she had confessed to her dear friend, Fayal Clarke, now editor of *St. Nicholas*, —to which he made this response:

St. Nicholas Editorial Rooms,
March 10, 1914.

DEAR MRS. BURNETT:

. . . Let me say now, dear lady, first of all, how very, *very* grateful I was and am for your letter, and its fascinating outline of the wonderful, beautiful story, "The Lost Prince" (a *perfect* title, by the way) that is weaving itself in your thoughts especially for St. Nicholas. Nothing has made me so happy, since I read the last page of "Tembarom" as the reading of that glimpse or *semi-scenario* of the ideal romance that, under the magic of your inspired mind and spirit,

the story is sure to be! You really cannot imagine how grateful I am to you, both for letting the story tell itself to you so beautifully, and then for taking the trouble to tell it to me so delightfully in your letter. I own I reproach myself for causing you all that trouble—and yet, not for worlds would I spare a word of your letter! You see how selfish I am!

And yet, you do not need to be told that, dearer to us than even the longed for story, is the dear *Author* of it, and Mrs. Clarke and I have been grieved to hear again of those "imps" of pain. . . .

Yours affectionately,

W. F. Clarke.

A paragraph in another letter from Mr. Clarke, about the same date, reflects a characteristic observation of hers:

St. Nicholas Editorial Rooms,
January 24, 1914.

Dear Friend of our Very Souls:

. . . And, dear friend, what you say in your letter about that divine gift being proof against both physical pain and mental depression is so true and so wonderful! That light burns with an ever-increasing glow of light and life and spiritual power! And the infinite Spirit which bestowed it upon you and us is, and will ever be, "keeping watch above His own." It is strange but I can never have any feeling of danger or risk of anything but ultimate and complete *Good* coming to you, somehow. You are *safe*, because you are so completely one with the Infinite—so wonderful a manifestation of the divine Soul-of-Things.

CHAPTER XXX

THE MAKING OF A MOTHER-IN-LAW

There was, however, something more pleasant than the afterclap of the disturbance in the Archie and Annie house to greet her, as she landed on the dock at New York. Was she to become a mother-in-law? It seemed so, although an all important "yes" was still unsaid. But she set to work with the tactful ingenuity of a devoted mother of an Only Child, to prove her acceptability in that rôle. She had very definite theories as to the qualities requisite in a viable mother-in-law. These theories emphasized to the fullest extent self-effacement; but joined to it characteristic qualities of a fairy godmother such as the power of appearing at the first hint of distress to chase away (with every possible friendly craft, and with a shower of gold, if that were needed) all the spirits of gloom. Her feeling about mother-in-lawhood was infinitely tender, the offspring of the very finest in her as the Great Happifier. She had not had a happy marriage experience (not due, however, to any mother-in-law complex) but her heart cherished great ideals for a happy marriage, and what more natural than that she would want to see them realized in the case of her Only Child. A cannily astute, as well as loving, mother-in-law, she knew to be one of the sine qua nons of a happy marriage.

She was really on the way to comfort Edith, in Bermuda, and there was opportunity for only a little skilfully planned party for the two young ones and selected friends before she continued on her journey.

From Clifton Heights she wrote to Mr. Clarke about "The Lost Prince":

Clifton Heights,
Bailey's Bay, Bermuda.
June 14, 1914.

DEAR MR. CLARKE:

. . . Edith and I have been having our "silence." And while I was thinking for my work—calling for it—a splendid thought was given to me from the Outside.—It was one which had suggested itself vaguely once before but I had not been sure of it and had left it alone to work itself out. And this morning it made itself clear and told me that it was—not that perhaps it *might* be. You know what I mean.

I know you will want to hear where "The Lost Prince" has wandered. I have gone to him quietly every morning and written just what came to me. And the thrill has come into it. When I read the last chapter to Edith this morning she said it lifted her out of the world and made her blood race through her veins. She said I *must* tell you she felt like that. I am glad, because when she begins to utter little cries when I am reading to her, all is well. It has always been so, since she was a child.

I have written fifteen thousand words, and my only fear is that I shall write too much that will be too impossible to cut. It would be so hard to cut thrilling adventure. How *could* one cut pages out of the story of a boy—a boy who is a Prince but who does not know he is one, though he has always the noble image of a Prince before him—making his way through Europe in the guise of a stalwart little tramp, but secretly carrying a sign and a message to stray men in crowded streets, at palace gates, in forests and on mountain sides—he himself ignorant of all but that he must obey and pass on in silence. . . .

She was back in Plandome by the middle of July, the *modus vivendi* having been arranged with regard to the family disagreement. She was met at the dock with the

announcement than an important matter had been settled in the affirmative at "West-by-North," Clarence C. Buel's Westchester farm over the State line from Ridgefield, Connecticut, on the moonlight (and "mosquitoy") evening of July 4. She let loose her exultations to Kitty and Gigi, in this letter:

Plandome Park, Manhasset, Long Island.
July 27, 1914.

DARLING KITTY AND GIGI:

. . . Now, about Constance! Her name is Constance and she is one of the two daughters of the first wife of Mr. Buel, who has just retired from The Century Magazine. I will tell you what she is.—She is a *pet*—and a little duck and a little dear, and Vivian is the most fortunate and the most radiantly happy boy on this earth. She is a little slim wisp of a child of twenty-one, but she is a wise, perfectly mature-minded little thing, when one talks to her—and before. A fearfully maligning picture of her sister Trix has been published in the papers as her portrait. She is perfectly natural and *real*, and clear as crystal. She has quite wonderful blue eyes, whose wonderfulness you don't suspect at first. When she begins to talk about something serious, she has a way of stopping a minute to *think*, and you see lovely, eternal stars come into her eyes and stay there a minute. She is, in fact, a sort of American Little Ann [in Tembarom]—and quiet and calm and with a sweetly concealed little back bone of much strength. She is not as grave as Little Ann, and she plainly enjoys herself every minute. She has years and years less than Vivian, but he always was twenty-one, and now he is more so than ever. He does *so* love her. And he is so happy.

Just think, she is as musical as he is, and she has a darling voice—a bird of a voice! No dull evenings at home for them. They will just revel over the piano. She plays for

him and he plays for her, and he composes songs and she sings them. He has done some lovely things. She also swims like a little fish, runs a motor, and dances like a fairy besides adoring sailing. Her mother, I believe, could manage a sail boat like a skipper. All Saturday afternoon she and Vivian worked together on "Delight," preparing the sails, etc., and all Sunday morning they sailed on the Sound and came back sunburned to the bone. She is the most feminine thing, and yet, in her slimness and spirit and gay young air of good cheer and fun, rather like a darling boy.

. . . Vivian would send his love to you if he were here and he would say, "Hooray! Hooray! Hooray! Kitty and Gi! Hooray! Hooray! Hooray!" I say it too. I was wondering what I could do to keep him from growing tired and sad! Now he has begun all over again. God bless them both! Just think how the ancient silver spoons will come in—the Berchtesgaden. [Bought there.]

. . . The story of "The Lost Prince" is turning out such a darling—with *vision* in it and the fine, high spirit of a kingly lad—almost a legend—running through centuries like a thread of light and shining over in the Marylebone Road and all sorts of grubby places.

They were married in November, 1914, and Mrs. Burnett was the happiest one in the gay little wedding party that filled the sun-bathed living-room of the Buel apartment in New York City, to witness that quiet little ceremony. She felt that Vivian had his feet set in the path of what he had always visioned as the greatest happiness.

A little later, because several years of very hard work had worn him down, she suggested that he and Constance should make a belated honeymoon journey to a land of his desire, Japan, and she would, of course, be fairy godmother. So

they sailed in February, 1915, via the Panama Canal. To Fayal Clarke she wrote:

Plandome Park, Plandome, L. I.
January 25, 1915.

DEAR FRIEND:

. . . Yesterday we felt we must go into town to say "au revoir" to Constance and Vivian, whom I am sending away on a long and joyous journey via Panama, San Francisco, Honolulu, Japan, China, and various enchanted islands. I decided in one swoop that I must do it.

Last Sunday week Vivian *owned* at last that he was tired out and was continually having neuritis and things snatching at him. He thought he must make his firm give him a month's holiday. I said in my fastidiously elegant little way, "A month's holiday be hanged. This is the time when and the place where your Mammy arrives upon the scene."

It will not be too late if he stops now and spreads his wings for fairyland. It might be too late if he waited another year. I sent him away to play with the map and choose the places he has always most wanted to go to. He and Constance sail from Philadelphia on the "Great Northern."

Her only child and her only daughter-in-law remained in the Orient until June.

The summer of 1915 was taken up chiefly with family matters leading up to the lawsuit, and there was very little writing.

To this year belongs an exchange of letters between her and James Whitcomb Riley, which reveals these two American writers at their best in affection and mutual appreciation. Mrs. Burnett had contributed to a symposium of tributes to Riley, published in *The Writer* on his birthday, October 17, 1915:

To be the man whose every written line has made the men and women reading it warm with tenderness for him and feel it thereby easier to warm with tenderness toward every human thing—to have filled the world with gentle laughter and gentle, loving catchings of the breath through sheer exquisite lovableness—is surely one of the most beautiful good fortunes of life, and surely also it has been the beautiful fortune of James Whitcomb Riley. He does not know me personally, but he is one of my best beloved.

FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT.

He wrote this appreciation to her:

DEAR MRS. BURNETT: October 19, 1915.

You moved me very deeply with the sweet, winsome tribute paid me in *The Writer*. Your message was especially gratifying because of my long admiration of your mastery of the childhood spirit, as well as the spirit of all true character. May I very modestly accept your greeting with heartfelt thankfulness and appreciation, and return like good wishes very fervently to you.

Your ever grateful and loyal,

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.

And later:

DEAR MRS. BURNETT: November 3, 1915.

Thank you for your best of letters, and your books with your signatures—all of which are very deeply appreciated. Your feeling description of your great loss [confusing Vivian's illness with Lionel's death] years ago and your receipt of an unsigned letter [actually from Eugene Field] which you have always thought mine, makes me wish I were as certain as you are that I wrote it and gave you real comfort at a time when you so needed it.

In your work from the very first—before "The Lass of Lowrie's" even—I was struck by the certainty of the author's possession of real genius, as has been proved over and over again. I regret my now inability to hold the pen, and I cannot express myself by dictation. But you must know how sincere is my appreciation of every written word of yours. With this I mail a book to you which I have very cumbrously autographed with pencil and left hand.

Most gratefully and faithfully yours,

James Whitcomb Riley.

Dear Mrs. Burnett: November 4, 1915.

Have just discovered your added letter with the garden pictures, all of which I come upon with renewed delight. Truly, you are a very wonder-book, and if I were well enough I would at once respond to your generous invitation to come and see you. But alack, alas, I am only half a man, and have to borrow another's constant help, so must be content to leave visiting to those who can glibly get about. Have you got my book yet? If so, do find *something* in it to love and cherish.

Your always grateful friend,

James Whitcomb Riley.

Mrs. Burnett had returned to America in 1914, barely in time to escape being caught in the World War. When it broke, the horror of it came home to her with special vividness, because she had so recently been over much of the territory directly involved. She was one of the Allies immediately, and her denunciations of the "Boches" were trenchant and sincere. She wrote to Josephine:

Plandome Park,
October 4, 1915.

Darling Josephine:

. . . I wonder—wonder—wonder what my Josephine is doing in this time of unending strain. I know you are work-

ing and helping but there must be many a darkened home in little Tavistock and in big, silent Dartmoor. Do you remember how I used to say it always seemed like some great giant spread out in the sun—waiting. It waits for tragic things now. Howsoever this all ends, nothing can undo the tragedy. The world will have to begin again.

For the last two or three days we have been lifting up our heads a little because of the advance of the Allies. And yet, one's heart breaks at the thought of what an advance means to so many who are only the toys of a monstrous cruelty and egotism. I won't go on. The mere writing of it leads to such horror.

Out of all the clamor and all the dying of the war, a story was being developed for her; a strange, sweet mystic thing of spirit vision, harking back to the story, "In a Fair, Far Country," she had started when Lionel went. About this story, and another they had discussed, she wrote to Miss Jordan, who wanted something from her pen for *Harper's Magazine*, with which she was connected.

Plandome Park, Plandome, Long Island.
November 11, 1915.

MY DEAR ELIZABETH:

. . . Cheerfully—exultantly would I write both books within the next six months if I could, but if neither comes knocking at my door demanding to be written, I could not write them if starvation stared me in the face. . . . It would drive me mad to sign a thing which confronted me with a date, even if it pretended with all its might that it was not intended to hurry me. It *would* hurry me.

. . . Also, "In a Fair, Far Country" could not possibly be a "full sized novel." It isn't a novel at all. It is only a strange, strange thing.

. . . I wish you were here, dearest Elizabeth. I believe you would soothe me.

Evidently this idea was not yet ready to express itself. During the latter part of the summer, however, she wrote an uplifting little story for the Christmas issue of *The Century*, in which she put many of her thoughts about the healing power of the Christ. She called it, "The Little Hunchback Zia"—and then, early in 1916, "The White People" came forward. She gave the news to Elizabeth:

Plandome Park, Plandome, Long Island.

. . . I began "The White People" yesterday. I am drawn to it. I am now—the Other part of me—looking out of a deep window in a turret of a darkly frowning feudal castle facing a great climbing moor, haunted by heavy white mists which writhe and crawl as if they moved with some unearthly *life*—to cover or uncover things which are not always seen. That moor will not leave me until I have told its story—which is the story of a child who felt as if she had been born looking at it.

Always with love, QUERIDA.

"Querida" being the Spanish for Dearest, was a quite logical name that had grown into use between her and Elizabeth. "The White People" was the new version of "In a Fair, Far Country."

The first trial of the "suit" had held her in New York until late spring. She took refuge in Bermuda, and there "The White People" quickly finished itself.

She wrote Elizabeth about a dedication, a thing not common in her books, after her return to America.

Plandome Park,
Plandome, Long Island.

DEAR:

I had not thought of a dedication and "return mail" gives little time. Shall I say

"To Lionel."

And shall I add that verse which I am not *quite* correct in quoting, perhaps, but which you will be sure to know.—Is it, or isn't it Burroughs?

> "The stars come nightly to the sky;
> The tidal wave unto the sea;
> Nor time, nor space, nor deep nor high
> Can keep my own away from me."
>
> JOHN BURROUGHS.

I see the human link of connection between it and things Outside. Do you? Will others? Decide for me. I leave it in your hands. The verse, I think, ought to be in different type from the "To Lionel" above it.

Or would it mean more to the casual reader—

"To those who would draw near?"

If neither seems to say the thing I really mean, let us have no dedication.

Yours,

QUERIDA.

. . . I *love* the verse I quote.

An event was being awaited in the Vivian household, and the deep feelings of a grandmother were being stirred:

Clifton Heights, Bermuda.
May 20, 1916.

. . . I received Constance's dear little letter and I want you to tell her now that her Mammy yesterday bought some delicate stuff to make four little "first dresses." These are to be soft, little slips—not long, long ones as used to be the fashion—and they are made of a piece of fine stuff whose hem has a little exquisite embroidery on it. It is very dainty and pretty. I wanted to *make* something myself and thought it best to tell her, so that she will not buy four she will not need. These are very simple and dainty, and might be slipped on to a little person who was

being introduced to very first callers. It thrills me so to think of it.

God bless us all, my dears. Your own, MAMMY.

The return to America was made in late July, in order that the event should be attended with due ceremony and the proper measure of joy. She tells dear Elizabeth about it:

Plandome Park, Plandome, Long Island.
August 15, 1916.

. . . Great Heaven! I have not yet told you that I have a grand-daughter—which seems to have been born by Magic—so quietly and beautifully it appeared—and so wonderfully and radiant is its lovely little mother. I have now the relationship of Fairy Grandmother. The Fairy Godmother will pale by comparison. I wish you could see the Liliputian white wicker wardrobe I have lined through every drawer and shelf with softly orris scented, pale blue flowered white silk.

Between welcoming the new baby, christened Verity Constance, and setting her Plandome garden in order, she had a busy summer.

The winter she spent in Plandome, the war conditions making it impossible to think of going to Bermuda.

During the winter a great sorrow came to her in the loss of her dear friend, Sir Ronald Sutherland Gower, who, hardly surviving the shock of being made penniless through the extraordinary actions of a man he thought his friend, had been completely broken by the tragedy of the war.

There was another loss, too; dear Charlie Rice, of whom she had, however, in latter years seen little, died suddenly in Washington.

A friendship at this period with Josephine Daskam (Bacon), the writer of numerous stories about children, "The Madness of Phillip," and others, shows its traces in this letter:

226 West 59th Street,
March 29, 1917.

DEAREST MRS. BURNETT:

I got out of the hospital entirely on the vitality of your stupendous yellow tulips! I used to lie on my poor little tummy and gaze at them for minutes together, wondering why, when I was as yellow as they, I wasn't so beautiful!

Today I'm going out for a drive—the picture of me, a broken lily, reclining in a limousine, is too funny for words.

Did you hear about my little girls getting the measles, my little boy the croup, my French poodle brain fever (two vets and morphine hypodermics) and my gentleman cat having kittens? All while I was in the hospital. He always was a boy cat, up to now, but the general excitement was too much for him, I suppose. His name was Caesar—and the only fact about Caesar's wife was that she was above suspicion, you remember! Now we try to call him Calpurnia.

Yours affectionately,
JOSEPHINE D. BACON.

With the entrance of the United States into the World War Mrs. Burnett sought more and more eagerly to take her part on the side of right. The desperateness of the conflict was a matter of hourly anguish with her, and she specially felt for her friends in England. When the United States was about to cast its lot with the Allies, she wrote to Rosamond:

April 6, 1917.

. . . Your letter has just arrived and I will dash off a few lines, if no more. I am sending you a New York Herald containing the President's speech, though, of course, by

this time you have read it. I send the paper more to show you the spirit of things. The country is aflame with enthusiasm. I wanted you specially to read the description of the wild scene at the Metropolitan Opera House when the news arrived. I so loved the man in the gallery who had the sense to call out, "Three Cheers for our Allies!" which seems to have thrown the people into a frenzy of feeling.

. . . I am absolutely shaken to the soul by a realization of what the Russian Revolution means to the whole world. It gives an enormous hint to slave-driven Germany, which is only just beginning to suspect how it has been driven and slaughtered to feed the mere vanity of a mad monster. You must have read of the things openly said in the Reichstag—Bethman Holweg's speech was an outburst of the genius of bluff and trickery—but there are those who read between all its pretended eloquence of promises the one thought, "But the first thing is to *win the war*." Pour forth your blood; see your fathers, husbands and sons slaughtered; rob yourselves for us; die in torture with your broken and torn bodies and souls—and keep just as many of our dazzling promises as will suit our interest and glorification. When it is said fiercely, "the Kaiser can no longer be lord of all, the Reichstag must rule and make terms of peace and war, etc." that is going far for Germany. Russia has shown them the way.

. . . There is one thing certain; that the knowledge that America apparently stands ready to pour forth her millions and her aid in all she is strongest in—even if her army cannot be got together in a moment—must give a huge uplift to those who are bearing burdens beyond all human strength.

She soon discovered her special war work. It was highly personal, as was characteristic of her. She found soldier

and sailor boys here and there to whom she could bring courage and comfort by her letters. They wrote to her from "Somewhere," and she sent them messages out of the depths of her heart, into which she poured all that she had of genius for writing, and of genius for being a mother and a happifier. And her books were doing their war service, too. One of her boys wrote her:

H. M. S. *Leviathan.*

MY DEAR FRIEND:

. . . Your dear letters tell me so very much; all I can say by way of expressing myself on paper is that they are splendid; such a firm grip of solid friendship on every page, that I can almost feel the strong hand clasp behind it all. *I love it.* I can feel very strongly, too, the influence of The Magic Circle; it feels just as solid as upon that great day when you drew it around me; it is your "Magic Circle, through which no harm can penetrate." I want to tell you that I was well clear of that great disaster at Halifax.

Perhaps one of the most gladdening pieces of mail she ever received in her life was a postal forwarded to her by her English publishers, Hodder & Stoughton:

4/5/17

DEAR MADAME:

Am just writing this P. C. in a spare minute to thank you for writing "T. Tembarom." It was lent to me when I had gone sick, and was, in addition, most completely fed up with life in general.

It was a splendid tonic, your novel—it is a real bucker, and braced me up tophole.

I should like to receive three such books every week to read and pass on—tho' I made that request to my people long ago, and their first consignment should be arriving any mail—books and magazines, "three a week" quantity I asked them for.

I hope it has done dozens of gloomy beggars as much good as it did me.

Thank you again for it. May you write many more such.

Yours sincerely,

ONE OF THE MESOPOT. EXPEDITIONARY FORCE.

Baghdad.

How she felt about the workers in the war she tells in this letter to Doctor Kenneth Campbell, Rosamond's husband:

New Windsor-on-Hudson, New York.
July 21, 1917.

DEAR KENNETH:

For months I have been wanting to write to you and as I sit at my desk now I ask myself what *can* one say to one's friends in such days as these. All the things we knew and lived among a few years ago seem to have passed away and if one is not on the ground—so to speak, face to face with great and poignant things—one feels so speechless before those who are.

You are, dear Kenneth. You have taken your skill and your strength and all that is best and most profound of you to serve need such as the whole world's history has never known before. It is very splendid to be of those whose whole life's training has been to perfect a gift which Fate has suddenly made a treasure rich beyond words. . . .

I don't know where you are or how you are doing your work, and I know one cannot ask direct questions in these times. I suppose you are in England; but you might be in France—but wheresoever you are, I know you are giving *all* of yourself and not only all your skill, but all your kindness and strong patience and cheer which will make courage in those who suffer and perhaps despair.

What greater thing could a man do than save another man's *sight* for him? That is what you and your fellows are

doing. And this letter of mine is chiefly to say, "God bless you."—God bless each and every one of you!—God bless every touch and movement of your hands—and every keen glance of your eyes—and every quick thought of your brain! And when I say "God," Kenneth, I am not calling upon that archaic figure of a sort of omnipotent, irascible, old gentleman who has been depicted as sitting on a throne and going into vengeful furies when people did not praise him satisfactorily. I am calling on the Power—the Illimitable Creative Force and Source which even the most modern of scientists has *some* name of his own for. I am calling on The Thought which thought the World—and which Thought *you*—and *could* not have Thought you as a mean thing or an ignoble one.

So every gift of your being and each of those moves of your skilled hand are the expression of its illimitable Power—if you *know* that is so. The people who do not know break the connection with the Force—the link of the Chain, and so are all adrift.

It is not a mere mystic, abstract vision—it is a Force—like all others—which are after all part of it.

In this hour, when half the world seems to stand and gaze aghast and panting into a yawning hell in which the other half seethes, so many have awakened to realize the broken link to try to seize on the snapped end of the chain of connection.

For many a long year I have been thinking—thinking—and reading—reading—because, even as a child I vaguely knew that something must have broken or we could not all have been so at loose ends and have been so perpetually taunted by aimless stories of a petulant, eagerly punishing Power, whose capricious will it was to create sentient creatures to chastise for the tendencies He Himself had implanted in them. I knew that was unthinkable, though I

was afraid of my own daring in knowing it. But one rarely ever spoke of such things to one's friends. I don't think I ever spoke to you. I should not now if the whole world had not so changed that souls are beginning to be stripped bare and one often says what one would not have dreamed of saying not so long ago—not quite three years.

What I have written grew out of what I was thinking of the work you are doing, and of your strong, fine hands which I remember, and which must now sometimes seem to many a poor, anguished fellow like the hands of Destiny.

And whether you are in England or France, you are *face to face* with elemental things which show men souls as well as agonized bodies. Because of that I am going to say that I want you—when you are going to do either a great thing or a small one—to think of your hands—your skill—yourself, as I think of them. You—you are the expression of The Thought which thought the World. Say to yourself—whether you believe it or not—you may not at first, but you will later—say "The Power guides them—moves them—holds them. It is no Miracle, it is only the working of the natural, Illimitable Law."

Last year in Bermuda I met a young aviator who, I was told, had tremendous experiences. *He* told nothing. He was a quiet boy with blue eyes. Among other things, he had been in the North Sea fight. In Bermuda one had, of course, an opportunity of learning to comprehend the military and naval etiquette of not asking questions. But we talked together, and I loved him—that boy. He was so young, and though he looked so calm I had an inner feeling that he had perhaps seen and felt *almost* as much as a young—or old—human thing could endure. When we said good bye to each other I repeated to him something I had said to an officer friend and neighbor who had just been ordered to the front. [The Magic Circle.] I said it,

half smiling, because I think the other man—dear, big English soldier man—had thought it was a kind of magic spell. Perhaps it was; perhaps it wasn't. But I said it to my aviator boy. I confess I did not think of his remembering it or me. But three months and more afterwards I had a letter from him, and truly it was worth many times its weight in gold to me.—It was a letter written out of a strong, young heart. He had remembered, and because *he* knew the magic was not merely a joke, he held on to it and kept it and used it and found help and support in it. Since then we have written to each other several times.—I don't know where he goes or what he does, of course;—I send my letters to a certain port.

In a letter of July 23, 1917, to Elizabeth, she gives some interesting information—revealing that she has started on "the serial book for *Good Housekeeping*"—"not 'Misthress Donovan,' but one in which a man of the 'Duke of Stone type' [in "T. Tembarom"] is the hero. It will make an intensely interesting George Arliss play, I think." This was the book which eventually became "The Head of the House of Coombe." It was not to go ahead smoothly. Its first interruption came through the tragic death of Edith's idolized son, Ernest, by pneumonia, just as he was beginning to reap the rewards of his many years' struggle as an inventor. She fought desperately, with all her belief in a loving God and the efficacy of earnest, unselfish prayer, for the life of her sister's boy—and when he passed after a brief promise of recovery, it left them both crushed. The experience struck deeply at the roots of her faith, and it prostrated her so completely that work on her book was not possible for a long period.

CHAPTER XXXI

RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

Mrs. Burnett was born with a strong religious sense, and it never left her, though in her long life it submitted to many things, and appeared in many guises. She was never orthodox, but ever searching for a truth which she knew to exist beyond the realm of creeds.

Her God, to whom she pledged her undying faith, was Love, and through the years she faltered only when things happened which seemed so unjust that a loving God could not have created them. These mystified her, often dismayed her; but they could not convince her against her God of kindness and tenderness, even though she could no explain them. She once wrote to her nephew, Archie:

"Good is stronger than evil, love is stronger than hate to a mind cleared of *all* darkness and smallness. Nothing is impossible because Good is God's self."

She sought a religion that would appeal to her reason, and because of that, her belief (or her hope of belief) was a combination of emotion and philosophy, steadily developed by study along every channel that presented itself to her.

The Bible was her constant companion. She believed in it as a revelator of Love, and turned to it whenever she wanted comfort and guidance. She always declared that its messages to her were miraculous; and the more wonderful, the greater her need.

It was her custom to let the Bible open where it would, and search the pages thus presented to her, for words of comfort to her heart, or guidance in her problem. The quotations found in this way meant much to her, and often

she put beside them the dates on which she came upon them. October 4, 1905, for example, is against the following quotation from the thirty-fifth chapter of Exodus:

"Them hath he filled with wisdom of heart, to work all manner of workmanship, of the engraver, and of the skilful workman, and of the embroiderer, in blue, and in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen, and of the weaver, even of them that do my workmanship, and of those that devise skilful works."

This passage was a comfort to her possibly in a period when she was finding it difficult to get on with her writing; it was to her an assurance of God's support to those to whom he had given the creative power.

And this, of St. Paul, in the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians, was so much a guiding revelation to her that it is found transcribed in her handwriting, a number of times:

"Be careful for nothing; but with prayer and with thanksgiving let your requests be made unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your minds and hearts through Christ Jesus.

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

In her childhood she was, of course, a regular attendant at Church of England services, but there is no testimony that she was then a religious devotee, or was particularly concerned about the salvation of her immortal soul. As she grew up and married, she took the customary forms of religion lightly, being not very much convinced by them. In fact, the family could not have been classed as "churchgoers" at any time.

But in the first years in Washington she came into touch with the philosophic side of religion, and began to be positively interested. Annie Besant, the exponent of Theosophy, had adherents among Mrs. Burnett's Washington friends, and pamphlets on the subject were sent into the house. The interest in Theosophy soon led to an interest in Spiritualism, and attendance at seances. Experiments were entered into with mediums for messages from the dead, spirit-writing on slates, and mind-reading in general.

Charlie Rice, Will Dennis, Sarita Brady, and all the "advanced thinkers" of the Washington group were interested in these experiments. In a letter to Lizzie Elliott on Charlie Rice's death she harks back to those days with this sentence: "Do you know what I am thinking of continually? I am saying to myself, 'He has *found out*, and he was always so interested and curious. He has found out.'"

Mrs. Burnett's investigations in religion and philosophy soon took an individual turn because of belief at first in the action of the *human* mind on the body. When she was suffering from her first attack of nervous prostration, as a guest of Madame Edna Hall, in Boston, she was brought in touch with mind-healing, and took several courses of treatments with a local mind-healer. The "mind-healing" idea in the course of several years suffered, too, a change, and became "faith-healing," or faith-cure, bringing into the process a religious element that the mind-healing had not had. This connected up the idea of healing with that loving God, in whom Mrs. Burnett had such a longing faith.

Quite soon this study of faith-cure brought her in touch with the new religion, Christian Science. She got and read the text-book, "Science and Health, with Key to the Scriptures," written by Mary Baker Eddy, as the foundation for the study of the principles of Christian Science,

and she also attended church services and testimony meetings, from which she believed she received benefit. She placed herself under one of Mrs. Eddy's students for treatment, and likewise enrolled herself in a class for higher study, but did not find herself able to complete the course. For some reason, despite her sympathy with Christian Science, and her real need of healing, she was not able to accept it wholly, and, though from time to time she turned to it for help, she never absolutely enrolled herself as a Scientist.

That her method of thought, consciously or unconsciously, was influenced importantly by what she learned from Christian Science, there is ample testimony. To many people it will probably be a surprise to be told that she was not an avowed Christian Scientist. "The Dawn of a Tomorrow" is generally credited with being a Christian Science book, and so is "The Secret Garden." Throughout all her later books will be found traces of the faith in that Allness of Good, which is one of the fundamentals of Christian Science. Christian Science surely started her mind along this line of thought, even though she turned to other sources for argument and confirmation in later years.

Her belief in the after world was positive, and it gave her great comfort. She always felt that Lionel was near, and in a letter to Emma Anderson, her early-years friend, she gives a good picture of her feelings on this subject:

Plandome Park, Plandome, Long Island.
December 12, 1916.

DEAREST EMMA:

If I could only hold you close in my arms I might be able to say something to you which would seem at least *real*. At such times as these, written words seem the most *un*real of all things in earth.

Darling, darling! There is one thought you must make

a truth for yourself, every hour. They have not gone away from you—those who loved you every hour of their lives. They are close to you—they are a guard around you—they are talking to you—listening to you—taking care of you as you took care of them. When a helpful and uplifting thought enters your mind, one of them has put it there—has *said* it to you—though you did not know you heard.

When Lionel went away I know my soul was saved by things he surely said to me when I could bear no more. I don't mean that I heard or saw things strange, but again and again a sudden realization of some uplifting thought came and I knew it was just what Lionel knew and would have *said* to me.

I am not thinking of your dearests as of conventional angels with flapping wings, or as of spiritualistic creatures lifting tables and throwing cushions about—I am thinking of them as real—real—as themselves—as Larz, as George, as Clough (you used to call him Clough when I knew him).

You say, "my two sons have joined their father and Robert." Surely, I had not heard that Robert had gone also. I was afraid when you wrote to me of George from Old Point—but I so hoped for the best.

Darling Emma, I have recently written a two-part story the Harper's Monthly began to publish in the Christmas number. I mention it because it says things which at this time might mean much to you. But do not read it until you can have the two parts together, because it really should be read as a complete thing. I should beg you not to read it in the magazine at all, but to wait for the small book which is to be made of it and which I shall send you. That, however, will not be published until Spring, and I think if there is comfort for you in the story of "The White People," you need it now. It is a strange story perhaps, but it says things which will perhaps make love seem near, even when, to mortal sense, it is far away.

There is an episode related in it which was a real thing. It was a wonderful *dream*.—No, I cannot believe it was a dream—which I myself passed through, and which I have never in the least forgotten. It has made the greatest difference in my life and in my feelings about those we can no longer see with human eyes. The episode I refer to is the story Ysobel tells of the experience she calls "Out on the Hillside." I do not know whether I have been able to convey anything of what the experience really was. It was so unlike any earthly thing that when I try to tell it and when I wrote it I felt as if perhaps there were no earthly words to express it. Perhaps I conveyed something—perhaps I did not. I do not know. But if I did, perhaps it will make you feel less desolate. The second and last number will surely be published soon and then I will send both to you.

My dear, dear little Emma, I feel as if I ought to see you, but I am so very busy that I could not make a journey. Is there any chance of your coming to New York? Let me hear from you again. I have always felt the same warm nearness to you. All my heart is with you.

Your loving,

BURNIE.

But her religion of daily practice was something that bore little relation to the fine-spun theories of Theosophy, or of reincarnation, or any creeds or dogmas. It runs through all the letters quoted, and really goes back to the advice of her mother, "Be kind." And she was kind—kind with an imagination which revealed to her subtleties and possibilities of kindness that an ordinary mortal would never glimpse. And she had a daily credo of "I believe in people and the eternal goodness of things." On a scrap of paper she wrote down this tenet of hers in these words:

"Just as a man doomed for life to the utter darkness of a subterranean prison would search for the remotest chance

of finding a chink where the light of Heaven shone through —lest he go mad in the blackness—so I search every human thing I know for the one gleam of good, without whose shining, life would be too black a thing to be endured."

She believed in happiness as a great moral factor in the lives of individuals and communities. This letter to Vivian gives some sense of this belief. It was strong and deep:

1770 Massachusetts Avenue,
August 10, 1897.

DEAREST VIVIAN:

Your letter shows me what a lovely time you are having. I like to think of it and that it is all so new. The loveliness of things is having them when one wants them most and not waiting until one is tired of wishing for them.

I have been epicurean about your life. I daresay it would surprise you if you knew how I have thought it out and planned it ever since you were born. There ought to be a tremendous lot of natural, splendid happiness in the life of every human being.

The acceptance of the belief that this is only a world of sorrows is hideous and ought to be exterminated. Also, I believe that if people enjoy themselves normally their pleasures will not make them *blasé*. It is an argument which has been telepathed about by people who have never been really happy which has led to others thinking they must be *blasé*, after they have enjoyed life. The truth is they ought only to have laid up new powers of enjoyment.

Keep this in your nice, healthful mind. Rejoice and do not believing that rejoicing will ever fail you.

And here is a veritable pæan of humble, aspiring motherhood:

DEAREST VIV: Tuesday, February 19, 1894.

. . . You are a temple that I am building and I want to build it high, and adorn it perfectly. Suppose that each

human being were built as a temple, and that each life were made a statue so noble that it was worthy of bending the knee to. I wonder where the centuries old ascetic contempt of life on earth began, and how.

If there is a Power which makes creatures in His image, He cannot be pleased with us for disdaining the one part of us which is Himself. And yet, all religions seem to teach us that we only aspire when we treat as dross and clay what in that image He created.

Am I a heathen because I think it ought all to be made happy and able to rejoice and be reverent of itself? I do not think anyone has ever existed who so strenuously, passionately insisted that people should be happy, as I do.

When I was a girl—not nearly as old as Gigi—and Lionel was going to be born, I used to kneel down before my window in the early morning, in floods of sunshine, and pray for him. I used to say, "Let it be happy, oh, God! I pray you, let it be *happy!* It does not matter what you do to me, but let it be happy!" And one night when I was lying awake at Cannes, after I had left him in Saint Germain [the Paris cemetery], it came to me suddenly, "Why, that prayer has been answered! It *did* not matter what was done to me—but he is happy!" At least, he could never be unhappy. I think he had great capabilities for suffering, and he did not stay to prove them.

Perhaps one's children are like the talents in the parable, and when I show you two boys at the end—whatsoever the End is—someone will say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

But being a happifier, she confesses, has its own rewards:

Plandome Park, Plandome, Long Island.
August 9, 1916.

. . . I remember a little girl in Paris, who, before Vivian was born, went about and gazed yearningly and hopelessly

at pretty baby things in shops. She could not afford to buy any of them and she felt rather pathetic. It is she who today makes dreams of baby dresses and lines little fairy wardrobes for Vivian's baby. The lovely and fairy part of my life has been that so many of the things I longed for myself and couldn't get, I have had the fun of giving to other people.

A corollary, or complement of her belief in the right of happiness for people, was her feeling that it was impossible for her to burden others with her sorrow. The "brave face" was her daily little personal drama. She rarely complained, and this is something to say for a person whose nerves had really been worn to thin edges by overwork in her early years, and whose heart and other internal mechanisms would often almost refuse to function.

Once or twice her anguish got the best of her stern suppression. Just before the beginning of the illness that finally wore her down, she wrote this to her only child:

Clifton Heights, Bermuda.
December 28, 1920.

DARLING:

. . . I will—for a reason—frankly tell you now, that for years the greatest part of my strength has been given to a certain game of bluff on more occasions than you have ever guessed. The bluff was to convince the world that I was not an unrelieved Bore who was *always* ill—in one way or another. Sometimes—quite often—I can quite "carry it off"—but not always. The trouble is that sometimes I am absolutely *prevented* from doing things I ought to do—or must do. No one should know at all if the thing did not make explanations necessary. That is why I go into this revolting detail now. I must ask you to do things.

. . . Oh! I do want to be *let alone* by pain. I do—I do. I am so tired all over my body, Vivvie, that it almost breaks

my spirit. If I am allowed to gnaw my dog biscuit in peace, perhaps that will pass away.

It is so quiet here—and so sweet and so like early June. Roses are everywhere. But just now I am so tired. Perhaps I shall bound up again and be quite well—but this is to explain why you must be very faithful to your Mammy and attend to her business.

Cross words with her were so infrequent as to be almost beyond memories' recalling. Whenever spoken, they were rather words of sorrow or regret than of upbraiding. She had limitless patience with every one, always expecting them to do their best, and rarely, be it said, being disappointed by any one who worked in her household. She so well understood the weaknesses of humankind, and made allowances for them—charity!

The following little scrap shows how humorously she looked upon her own deficiencies:

"This lyric was written on a morning when the Author, on sitting down to her work, found she had forgotten her pen—or something quite as important—. She rose and went in search of it; found it—sat down again—and discovered that she had no ink—or something *more* important. Got some—seated herself again—and found she had left her handkerchief somewhere;—went in search; returned with it; sat down again and found she had no blotting paper —and so on.

"This may not be an exact relation of facts—but it is something like it, and finally, fine frenzy seizing her, the Lyric was the result:

LITTLE SONG

I'm a Fool, and I admit it
Cheerfully.
I'm a Fool, and I proclaim it
Cheer-ful-ly.

Never a word I have to say
'Gainst those who call me so, all day,
For I'm a Fool, and I admit it
Cheer-ful-ly.
I'm a Fool, and insist upon it
Cheer-ful-ly."

As regards money obligations she was strict indeed. When Vivian, in college, showed more ability at spending than in managing his finances, she wrote:

". . . Do you know that in those awful, starving days in New Market [Tennessee] we never owed any one a farthing. We *went without*—food, clothes, fire. It is not what a gentleman or lady can do—to trust to luck to pay bills. Remember that when you begin life for yourself, as you will next year."

And so the paying of bills was her first worry and obligation, and to the end of her life she never borrowed or sought any kind of a loan.

But with her religion and philosophy, as with everything else in her life and work, it was the human application which most concerned her. She never spoke of self-sacrifice. She probably rarely thought of it as applied to herself, except vaguely. Yet, it was the key-note of all her personal relation, interpreted in terms of happifying other people. Among her papers was found the following quatrain, copied in her own hand, evidently chosen because it framed an idea of which she approved:

"Battles nor songs can from oblivion save,
But Fame upon a white deed loves to build.
From out the cup of water Sidney gave,
Not one drop has been spilled."

She never allowed herself to withhold that Christly "cup of cold water" from any one who came to her, and she was untiring in her endeavor to find out just what proper and practical form that symbolic "cup" should take.

But after all, her spirit of Happifier found its best and highest expression in her own household. She was not living for herself, or for her happiness. The quality of her life is reflected (and with that inevitable touch of humor, too) in the following paragraph from a letter to her only child and his family, written from a sick-bed in Bermuda:

Clifton Heights, Bermuda.
December 4, 1920.

. . . When I am ill, you don't know what a comfort it is to me to think how comfortable and free you will be. When I slip away you must give all your mind to thinking, "How *delighted* Mammy would be to see us doing the things we *want* to do, without worrying in the least! How she would laugh and make fairy stories and invent fantastic little insanities we are far too intelligent to go in for." You *must* help me in my little fortune, tucking away and tucking away.

And as a Christmas thought to Vivian, she wrote again from Bermuda:

". . . Be happy this Christmas Day, my Sweetheart, and be sure to make as many other people happy as you can. Do that above all things. So much kindness is needed in this big world and it is such a thing to thank God for when we are allowed to show it. Here is a little prayer: 'Let me be one of those who *help*.'"

CHAPTER XXXII

"NANDA"

"Coombe," though hopefully started, had not progressed easily, because of the Imp in his various phases, particularly the physical one. But Mrs. Burnett kept steadily at it and it did move along, giving her, from time to time, great joy, as fine points came to her in the working out—but mostly considerable anguish.

She felt that she must give as much time as possible to sister Edith in those days of grief over the death of Ernest. She took Edith with her into the apartment at The Madison Square, for the winter. The summer saw her once more in Plandome, picking up "Coombe" again in her Chinese writing-room in the south wing, and gardening even more passionately. There was certainly a magic in her handling of flowers, for she could dig them right out of their homes at any time of the year and put them where she wanted them. Experienced gardeners were always amazed at the nonchalance with which she transplanted, even in midsummer, growing flowers, shrubs, and trees, and kept them growing.

Her interest from now on was concentrated almost exclusively on her garden and her grandchildren—and, of course, her books.

In the autumn she went to visit, for a month or more, at Point au Pic, in Nova Scotia, with her friendly neighbors, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert S. Houston, of Doubleday, Page & Company.

Christmas was spent at Plandome with the fairy grandgodmother, a perfect fountain of joyous, imaginative gifts

to the babies and all members of the family. It was actually the first time illness had allowed her to be one of the group gathered about the Vivian tree, and she took great delight in this typical phase of grandmotherhood.

She constantly reiterated her belief that old age was a "state of mind," and that people became old because they accepted old age as an inevitability; looked forward to it; prepared for it, and resigned themselves to it; in fact, began to be proud of it. She would point out with a good deal of humorous scorn that people of the previous generation would refer to the dignity of age, and speak of things that were "not becoming" for a "settled person" to do. Women of those days, she said, would put on their little lace caps at forty or fifty, consider themselves "on the shelf," and sit with folded hands, waiting for the end and taking a great interest in funerals and tombstones. She had little patience with this kind of resignation to the onslaught of the years, and never allowed herself to think old thoughts or to grow old in looks.

Her interest in her appearance, her dress, her hair, her complexion, her figure, was just as keen when she was seventy as when she was seventeen—not because of any personal vanity, but because of her belief that to keep the body young-looking is to help keep the mind young-thinking, and that to give up the enthusiasm of youth is to be making footsteps along the pathway toward old age and a living death.

She had to the last a youthful power of enthusiasm, an almost childishly gay laugh, and a remarkably erect carriage and firm step. Life was abundant in her, and given the slightest chance, it bubbled forth. People meeting her for the first time always marvelled, even in her very last years, at her appearance of vigor. She has herself written, "It is remaining alive which makes life worth living, not

merely remaining on the surface of the earth." And alive, and young, she always was.

The getting to Bermuda this year (1920) was quite an exciting adventure, for previous to the date of sailing it snowed and sleeted for weeks at a time. The roads in the country were piled high. New York was snowed under and traffic almost suspended. However, a local farming friend, one Johnny Wagner, solved the problem of the departure by hitching up his teams to some old-time sleighs. Amid the diminishing blusters of the final storm, the party was slowly dragged to the near-by Port Washington station. She wrote, just after reaching the balmy, sunny mid-ocean isle:

". . . Our adventures in reaching our steamer were too many to relate in a mere letter, but after waiting at Port Washington station an hour or more, a train came at last, and as it had a baggage car attached we managed to take our trunks with us. They had not moved since we sent them on Wednesday, and would not have moved now if we had not brought them out and offered princely tips. It was indeed good luck that we went to Port Washington and discovered them there.

"We went to the Pennsylvania Hotel for the night as there were no taxis and I could not get to Mrs. Tutwiler's. [Her literary agent.]

"Mr. Danda [associate of Ernest] the energetic and faithful, had come to help us, and he and Archie got up at five in the morning to search for something to take our trunks to the boat. They finally succeeded, but could not find a taxi anywhere. The only vehicle they could secure was a venerable one horse cab, whose driver said he would take us to the wharf at 55th Street for ten dollars. We joyfully engaged him, but when we came down to get into the cab, another lady sat there firmly and said she also had engaged

it for ten dollars. As she was also going to Bermuda, we did not turn her out but made room for her. So the man got twenty dollars for driving twenty blocks. We were obliged to get out and walk a few blocks before we reached our destination, but as the sidewalks had been cleaned, after a fashion, and the cab carried our valises, we were not in a too desperate case. But we *were* thankful when we reached the wharf."

To be separated from her grandchildren only emphasized the privilege of writing to them:

Clifton Heights, Bermuda.
February 16, 1920.

DARLING VERITY:

Nanda is in Bermuda and there is no snow here and it is quite warm and there are roses in the garden. In the trees there are beautiful red birds and when they sing they say, "Don't hurry, don't worry, don't worry, don't hurry." Nanda hopes that some time Verity and Mother can come to see her in this pretty place.

Has Dorin begun to talk yet? You must write and tell me. Please give my love to her and tell her Nanda says she really must begin talking. I am sure she can talk if she tries.

I send you both a hundred kisses.

Your NANDA.

The Place where the Red Birds Sing.

DARLING VERITY AND DORIN:

Red birds come to see Nanda every day. Nanda throws corn out in the grass for them to eat. They are very glad that Nanda has come back to her pretty white house in Bermuda, because now they know she will come out every morning and give them their breakfast. They fly among the trees and sing and shake their pretty wings and say to each other, "Nanda has come back and she loves us and never

forgets to give us breakfast and dinner and supper. We love her and she loves us. Hurrah! Hurrah!"

One beautiful red bird is hopping about on a tree near my window. I think he has come to see if I am writing to Verity and Dorin. He is thinking he wants to send his love to you both. He thinks, "I will send it in Nanda's letter and it will be taken in a ship and in the train all the way to Plandome Park."

Verity, here is love from a red bird in Bermuda. Dorin, here is love from a Bermuda red bird. Nanda's love is with it!

Your

NANDA.

Constance being a bit under the weather, the following hand of help was held out:

". . . If you have a 'week end treasure' in Miss or Mrs. Schoefer, *do*, *do*, my darling dears, call her up—for your Mammy's sake. *Can* she be called upon to stay and take care of Dorin for a month while Constance and Verity come to me here? I will pay for her. I am afraid Constance would have *too* hard a time if she tried to bring both babies.

". . . We are a work loving family, but there is a point when wisdom is the better part of valor, and when both Constance and Vivian would be improved by being—figuratively or unfiguratively—put to bed for several days. I know that if Constance *can* come here, Vivian will occupy himself with his garden and will not be too lonely.

> 'In books and work and healthful play,
> Will his one month be passed,
> That he may give for every day,
> A good account at last,'

which is, I believe, a pious verse of Dr. Watts', of 'How doth the little busy bee,' etc. fame. It was Watts, wasn't it?

"I scribbled off a little letter to Verity and Dorin. I want to throw out little golden lines to them as often as I can. I am sorry to say I have used my last pictured note paper and I am not at all sure that I can get any here. I wish Vivian would send me a couple of boxes by post. A letter would scarcely seem a letter to a little thing if it were not written on small paper with a picture on it."

Constance went with Verity and the visit was a great success for every one. A bit of the spirit of it can be caught in these fairy-grandmotherly verses, sent as a letter after the departing guests:

"Verity! Verity! Where is Verity?"
That's what the Redbirds say,
"Verity! Verity! Where is Verity?
Why did she go away?"

They rustle the oleanders,
They tilt on the nearest tree
Twittering and singing, chirping and calling,
"Where *can* Verity be?"

"Verity had a thousand curls,
And light, little dancing feet,
She was Queen of all little girls,
Oh! Verity, you *were* sweet!"

"Verity had a fat little hand,
Full of sweet grains of corn,
She scattered them for us in the grass,
Bright with the dew of morn."

"Verity! Verity! Where is Verity?
Why doesn't Verity come?
Verity! Verity! Why, oh why—
Why did you go to Plandome?

The world is all pink oleanders,
The sea is Bermuda blue,
So are your eyes, so are our skies,
Bermuda's the place for *you!*"

So they go singing as they go winging
Their way through the bushes and trees,
"Verity! Verity! Come back, Verity,
Come back, Verity, *please.*"

To Elizabeth she wrote:

". . . Verity is really a wonderful little person. I am glad to have had the opportunity to become intimate with her. She has suddenly burst forth into mature conversation. As I wanted Constance to rest in the morning, I told her to send Verity to me when she awoke—as is her habit—at the peep of day. Therefore, at six o'clock began varied and active entertainment—and the furtive development of the young mind.

"My back is at this moment aching too devilishly to allow of my revealing *how* interesting the young mind was—how funny, how reasonable, how merry and how strong. By good luck, this creature has all sorts of assets to begin life with—a beautiful little body, large, attracting eyes, a skin like a flower petal, not a feature out of drawing—*and* a mass of silk hair in indestructible curls. Besides which—all her wits about her, an admirably amiable temper, and a definite personality which makes people look and listen the moment she dances into a room.

"She has a quality Lionel and Vivian had. You can let her come to a 'party' and she will only add to the joy of nations by agreeable conversation and fascinated interest in the company. It is a great luck for a creature to be *born* amiable and well mannered and unafraid and friendly. . . ."

And a final letter to Verity before her own return to Plandome:

. . . Nanda does want to see you so much. She will come home before so very, very long. Daddy and Mother write me beautiful letters and tell me how big you are and how

you can dress yourself, and about what a nice boat you made at Kindergarten. When I come home I am sure I shall find two lovely children with soft, velvet voices, and soft, velvet feet—and we shall have beautiful fun together.

I wonder what you like best to play with? Daddy says that you can dance and you can sing.

The redbirds here keep coming every day and I think they are wondering where you are. There was no rain here for about six weeks, and all the birds were so thirsty because there was no water, so I put two big dishes on the lawn near my chair and kept them filled with nice, cool water, and the birds were drinking—such lots of birds—all the day. If you had been here you could have given them water, too.

I send you hugs and kisses.

Your

NANDA.

Mrs. Burnett had, of course, taken "Coombe" with her, and was working valiantly at it. The quiet atmosphere of Bermuda was always a help to her writing, and she found "Coombe" going remarkably well. She remained in Bermuda longer than usual, until July, and was able to write "finis" to the novel there, in the bright, chintzy living-room overlooking the blue Bermuda sea.

In Plandome again, the summer was passed in gardening. There was a short article written this year, "Crinoline and Blue Serge," October, 1920, for one of the popular women's magazines, but she felt, even though there was another big book hovering in her mind—"Misthress Donovan"—that having finished "Coombe" (which was then running serially), she had earned a right to rest.

She did not feel equal to facing the cold months in the Plandome house, so as soon as the frosts had stopped her roses from blooming, and had turned the late chrysanthe-

mums brown, she set sail, with sister Edith, for Bermuda. She was installed there by December, and had hardly begun the work on her garden before she was stricken with a mysterious digestive trouble. The attack proved of great severity, and she was so completely prostrated that those about her began to fear that she might not rally. However, just as in so many other instances in her life, she came back from the depths—largely through the faithful nursing and care of sister Edith. But it had been a severe blow, and her recovery was slow. It was thought best to relieve her of all worry, and her business affairs were put in the hands of Vivian, who was sent for. She wrote, in a pitifully shaking hand, as soon as she could hold up her head:

". . . Your yellow paper letter was a blessed one. I could hear your voice and it uplifted my spirit.

"We have been having some heavenly days and I have been taken out to sit on the steamer chair among rugs and cushions. I talk feebly to Billy and he is making beds and planting things, inspired by my impelling soul. I tell him you are coming and you know everything about gardens and will help him. Please bring Gillett's Fern Catalogue. There are places here too shady for anything but ferns.

"I am better every day but it seems too slow.—I *hope* it will soon be quicker. I need waiting on like a baby—but it will pass.

"Re you 'You will soon be back at work again.' Here is a strange thing. When I seemed to be actually dying, there suddenly passed through my brain a new book and a comedy in one. It was one of those germs which float about until they are ready to be written. And a few days ago there came another—quite clear. They are both comedy things—which came out of the new world. They might be 1930, or something like it.

"You know That Which Is gives me the new things. You

see, the modern social world *is* Comedy.—It will take a century or so to make it an accepted custom. Here are the titles—which I *wrote* down—*but you must keep them dead secret*—except to Constance:

No. 1: The Industrious Apprentice
No. 2: A Transfusion of Blood"

And, to show that nothing ever kept her from looking forward, Vivian had hardly returned from his visit to her before he received this letter, triumphant in the surety that the summer's garden would bloom for her:

". . . One line in haste to catch the boat. Yesterday I managed to send the list of seeds to Boddington—which are to go to you—for Louis [gardener]. I chose some specially fine antirrhinums. I want splendid beds of them—and hope they will grow as they do here.

"The explanation of the large supply of mignonette is that I want to have the scent of it all over the garden. I believe Louis can just scatter it and leave it to grow. If it doesn't, never mind. Let him throw it wherever there is a bare place between flowers—anywhere—just like poppy-seed. If it grows, it will be heavenly; if it does not, we can afford to leave it. . . ."

And this tells of the pleasure she was extracting for herself out of the little details of the Vivian family life:

". . . It is so nice to hear about the babies—rushing with birthday packages and shouts. I anticipate making the acquaintance of both all over again—though I may even make Dorin's for the first time, as it were.

"Yes, indeed, they must have twin beds which will last them until they are married—and I want them to be pretty ones. Perhaps, as prices have fallen, the ones which mounted to the sky when Constance and I went first to see them, and temporarily quailed, may now have become pur-

chasable. At any rate, you, the keeper of my bank account, will know how far I may indulge myself in pretty painted or otherwise adorned things with safety.

"Tell Verity how delighted and surprised and filled with 'high praise' Nanda was when she heard that she could dress Dorin. And tell Dorin that I shall *love* to talk to her when I come home. . . ."

And this is, perhaps, in a few sentences, a complete autobiography:

". . . I was delighted by the description of Constance' new frock. Certainly, she must get a hat to match. I wish I was rich, and rich and rich and could be a fairy to her and to you all. Nothing in the world would be so lovely as to be a fairy. . . ."

The Play Girl in her never got spoiled, as her grandchildren could testify. Of her playing with them she wrote to Elizabeth Jordan:

". . .Vivian and Constance came in to our mid-day dinner and in the afternoon Vivian brought the children up in the car and they rushed in out of the rain, dancing and shrieking with joy because Nanda was going to play with them. I am Nanda, you know, and I am considered desperately fascinating. You see, *le bon Dieu* so made me that I can 'be' any number of persons at a moment's notice.

"I am 'Mrs. Desmond.' Verity is my daughter, Lily Desmond, and Dorin is Mrs. Clarence, our neighbor, who lives in Archie's room and goes to market in the bathroom. Mrs. Desmond's cook has left her, but Lily cooks perfectly, and we telephone to Mrs. Clarence to come to tea and have magnificent collations on the top of a box turned upside down, covered with scraps of silk and set with dolls' tea things.

"A great deal of telephoning is done and the 'market man' constantly makes excuses and hasn't got what we want. My arm chair is a car and gets out of order, and the

To Frances Hodgson Burnett.
With sincere admiration
Mary Pickford.

FAUNTLEROY

The motion-picture from the play made by Mary Pickford brought the famous story again to the fore in 1921.

garage man can't mend it because he is 'so busy.' Once he was painting his house.

"The animated telephonings of these two small things—one four—the other three—form a *resumé* of the difficulties of modern housekeeping. They are always without cooks and cannot get things done. They do all the telephoning. 'Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings.'

"Verity is growing prettier and prettier. She has a flower petal face, and a halo of curling corn silk hair, & dimples, & roguish eyes—*and* darkening lashes—*and* a quaint, elfish, little sideways smile.

"Dorin is tiny and fantastic and elfin, but not pretty yet. My Den is a nursery. The closet in the corner contains a box full of scraps of silk (It is the tea table when it is emptied and turned upside down,) a double set of wicker doll furniture, a box of tea things, and a family of dolls of assorted sizes—half of them dressed in brilliant blue, half in brilliant scarlet. I invented and dressed them. They are the Poppies and the Larkspurs.

"There is Mr. Poppy, in scarlet velvet knickerbockers and silk hat and coat. Mrs. Poppy and a little sister Poppy and little brother Poppy. Mrs. Larkspur and an equal set of Larkspurs. Perhaps Mrs. Poppy gave birth to all the Poppies, and Mrs. Larkspur to all the Larkspurs—otherwises, how account for the distinct coloring? They make quite showy parties sitting in the wicker chairs round the tea table. And Mrs. Desmond and Lily are most superior in their manners."

For Mrs. Burnett, and the family, the main literary event of this year was the production of the film of "Little Lord Fauntleroy," by Mary Pickford. The opening was at one of the New York theatres, and she was, of course, invited by Miss Pickford to be present. She felt at first that she was not equal to the effort, but later decided that she

must manage to go. By a strange contretemps, Miss Pickford was not informed of her presence in the box reserved for her, and in her little speech expressed her deep regret that Mrs. Burnett had been unable to come. There was a pleasant exchange of letters between the two, Miss Pickford writing:

. . . Your letter was—and is—a great joy to me, as I intend to keep it always. You are more than generous in your praise of the picture and of our work. I am sure that there must have been many things in the picture that were not quite pleasing to you—certain liberties—and many omissions, but from the kind tone of your letter, I am sure that you have made allowances for us, knowing that it is not always easy to take a classic like "Little Lord Fauntleroy" and place it on the cold, silver screen, and retain the spirit and charm of the book. Fauntleroy cost more effort, time and money to produce than any other film of my experience. So you see, dear Mrs. Burnett, that we did try to do justice to your very beautiful story.

I regret exceedingly that I missed the pleasure of being presented to you the opening night. I have appeared in four of your stories on the screen, "Dawn of a Tomorrow," "Esmeralda," "Little Princess"; last and best of all, "Fauntleroy."

Thank you again for your charming words of encouragement.

Very sincerely,

MARY PICKFORD.

Mrs. Burnett's illness there had given her a strange fear in regard to Bermuda, and she decided not to go back, but to spend her winter in New York; so she went again to the Madison Square Hotel. "Coombe" was nearing the end of its course as a serial, and the question of its publication as

a book was the matter up for serious consideration at this time. The book had run to very considerable length. For the serial publication it had been most ably cut, but she was anxious that for the book all the material should be put back. All that she had written put inside one cover would have made a volume so large as to be commercially impracticable, if not impossible. Frederick A. Stokes, her close friend and publisher of later years, found a splendid solution of the problem in dividing the book into two parts, one dealing with events preceding the World War period, and the other concerning the events of the war and after—particularly the story of the girl, Robin, and the boy, Donal. This arrangement suited Mrs. Burnett too, for there were scenes which she wanted to write, and had not, because she knew she was overrunning the practical limits of space granted a modern one-volume novel. So "Coombe" was published in two parts—"The Head of the House of Coombe" and "Robin."

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE LAST MONTHS AND A MESSAGE

There had already begun certain attacks of an internal pain, which alarmed Mrs. Burnett; or one might say that she became obliged to confess to them, for she had been fighting against them for some time, along with other things. She was quite as passionately gardening as ever, but she found that she could not take her usual part in the actual work. She kept out-of-doors, however, as much as possible, most of the time sitting under her favorite oak-tree in the rose-garden, at the side of the house. Here, installed in a comfortable long chair, she usually found herself surrounded at tea-time by the family, neighbors, and house guests, often quite a motley group of bathers from her beach, still in their dripping clothes, or yachtsmen just in from a sail on the bay. And she still made a brave face of it—so brave, in fact, that visitors did not suspect the struggle it meant to her, and went away saying, "What a remarkably keen and vigorous woman!"

With some flowers, in late fall, she sent this message to Elizabeth Jordan:

. . . Here come to you the very last—last—last cold, brave flowers of my garden. I got up for an hour or so before lunch to gather them for you. A sudden, cold, rough wind drove me in at last. But here they are. The wonderful varied brilliant ones have died. No; flowers don't die. They simply go to Flower Heaven, where I pray I may join them some day. I am thankful to these last of all ones. If these have not been chilled too much by yesterday's cold

gale they will last for two weeks or more. If they have been nipped, they may wilt in a few hours, and not spread themselves out valiantly as is their lovely habit. . . .

Always with love,

QUERIDA.

For the winter she went again to New York, this time to an old-fashioned apartment-hotel in lower Fifth Avenue. In a letter to Rosamond she says:

". . . I left Plandome Park two weeks ago to establish myself in the apartment I have taken for the winter. I have never had such a charming one before.

"The Grosvenor is a dignified, quiet place; quite a thing apart from the New York caravansery of a hotel. The Biltmore and The Ritz would doubtless regard The Grosvenor as old fashioned. The Grosvenor would privately look down upon The Ritz and The Biltmore. . . ."

To Josephine Brown she wrote this letter, which showed what was really going on beneath the cheerful exterior she was endeavoring to present to the general outside world:

". . . Symptoms and doctors *are* rubbish. They have no right to exist. They make me writhe with shame. Doctors don't know half as much as you do yourself if you are intelligent and self-controlled.

"For three years I have been medically tested and I was organically quite sound, but had what *seemed* to be a nervous indigestion. I couldn't help knowing that myself and had stopped eating of my own free will three years ago —and don't miss or mind it. But nothing stopped a horrible breathlessness which increased my spasms. The doctors could tell me nothing. A few weeks ago I began to suspect that my blood was not properly oxygenated. I couldn't do it myself because I could not take long breaths. I sent for an oxygen tank and the first inhalations stopped the

breathless spasms. I have been taking it ever since and at least am not being slowly suffocated. But one does not recover from three years' suffering in three minutes. The true reason of all this is the unending nerve strain of years.

". . . I shall go back to Plandome Park at the beginning of May. I am praying that I may be well enough to live in my garden from morning until night. Last summer I could only sit under a tree and talk to the gardener-in-chief.

"I only have one real gardener; the other . . . who is paid $5 a day for weeding and pushing a lawn mower and drops his tools and leaves the instant it is half past four—leaving all his weeds, etc. scattered on the paths or the drive. You see, five dollars is more than a pound a day.

"Dear Josephine, if I could only have you with me! If we were only not so far away from each other!"

By the end of May (1922) she was back in her Plandome garden again, perhaps a little stronger, but still able only to spend a few short hours of the day on her feet in the garden. She had not had much inclination for writing, but the next novel, "Misthress Donovan," had been started with a few pages. She did not even do much writing to her friends, and her family was all gathered about her, so there is little correspondence to give the picture of her mind in her own words. Her physique was being relentlessly battered by pain, and her resistance being undermined; but her courage was still undaunted and she was making her hope of better things stand firm.

Her old friends, Colonel Frederick Greene and his wife, Grace, who, with their boy, Francis, dated back to the days at Sands Point, persuaded her to come with them for a few weeks to their little woodland retreat, Rensselaerville, in the foot-hills not far from Albany, N. Y., where Mr. Greene was attached to the Highway Department of the State government. There she was the guest of Mr. and

Mrs. Huyck, intimates of the Greenes, who had a delightful and comfortable house. The journey was well worth the effort, for Mrs. Burnett seemed to gather courage from the change, and felt that she had gained some well-worth-while new friends.

In the late fall she went back to her beloved Grosvenor, in New York again, and found her hope of a quiet and cosey winter in town taken from her by the passion for building that had suddenly seized lower Fifth Avenue. Buildings were being torn down on all sides of her, and riveting-machines were ripping the atmosphere all day long. She was allowed to give up her lease, and found a compact and airy little apartment at 340 Park Avenue, which seemed to have qualities to console her for the loss of the convenience she had found so valuable in her more spacious winter quarters lower down-town.

During the previous year she had suffered a great loss in the death of her friend, sympathizer, and literary agent, Mrs. Julia R. Tutwiler, who had represented her over ten years, and had made many important sales involving many unexpected thousands of dollars, and rescued many a payment from theatre or moving-picture men, and even book publishers. Ann Watkins (Mrs. Hartley Davis), who succeeded to Mrs. Tutwiler's business, immediately found a warm place in Mrs. Burnett's affection, and became a friend who likewise had a power to arouse enthusiasm, and a desire for work. As a result of this new association, Mrs. Burnett spent a considerable part of these winter months revising her dramatic version of her book, "T. Tembarom," which had always been considered to have in it the makings of an exceptional "comedy of manners."

Miss Watkins, understanding Mrs. Burnett's all-absorbing interest in gardening, brought to her from one of the leading magazines the suggestion that she, as a veteran

gardener, should give to the world some of the practical results of her experience, in a way that should so express the joy of gardening that the gardening spirit would be aroused in those who had never really gardened. This was presenting the idea from an angle that would inevitably appeal to the Romantick Lady, placing her as a sort of propagandist for gardening to the multitude. Mrs. Burnett quite readily consented, although the suggestion of twelve articles in a series somewhat frightened her.

The intestinal attacks were not diminishing in frequency, nor in intensity, but she was still looking forward, undaunted. She wrote to Rosamond:

340 Park Avenue, New York.

. . . I have just posted a letter to you and one to Kenneth but I must write again in answer to yours from Rousdon, which arrived this morning. It was so sweet of you to write and tell me of your Christmas, and make me feel that my England—*my* England has not been swept out of the universe. It lifted my heart in my breast and made me know again that there was some reason for living.

I can only repeat what I have said in the letter I sent about two days ago—if I were not bound by lease to this apartment I would actually take my beloved little Helen [her maid] and board the nicest steamer one could choose and sail for England or Italy at once. I could live—on my income—exactly as I liked in either country. Here, no income, however limitless, could buy me what *I* want.

America is wonderful, but it is wonderful as a huge,—a limitlessly powered machine—is wonderful—pouring forth money—pouring forth inventions—pouring forth discoveries and superman activities—but roaring and banging and rattling and shrieking and crowding itself with disorder and making a god of Speed—speed—and a greater and

greater speed, which leaves neither space nor time for the calm and grace and beauty it might rejoice in if itself did not tear down and crowd out and smash and overwhelm them. It has such magnificence of incredible beauty and boundless spaces! But every American and every European seems burning with but one ambition, which is to crowd into New York, and places as nearly like it as possible, and there battle for more money, more speed, more building madly, and tearing down more madly still.

But there still remains Wittersham and Rolvenden. Do you remember telling me about the widow of dear old Millum? I think I sent her some money. Is she still alive?

It goes to my heart to be told that Rolvenden remembers me kindly. I loved the place so. Maytham was *home* to me. I suppose there is no dearth in these days of places one could rent for a summer?

. . . Imagine my having the courage this morning to actually think it might be possible for me to go to England! Your letter has much to do with the feeling. Tell me about all the nice places near enough to you which one might possibly rent for a summer, if one were well and courageous enough. Let us make fairy stories. Sometimes they come true. . . .

Your

FLUFFY.

During the early spring she made, from her New York apartment, a two weeks' visit to the home of Mrs. Cecelia Schotte, one of her near neighbors, in Plandome.

By the time she had returned to her own house in Plandome, the plan for the series of gardening articles had been worked out, but there was, of course, the shaping up of the garden itself to do before beginning the writing. For this year she had as her gardener Sven Lundbeck, a young

Swedish boy, graduate of an agricultural college at home, who had come to America for further study and was trying to earn money for his course in Cornell College the following winter. With this quiet, gentlemanly young fellow she had a springtime of unlimited joy and limitless planting.

The most important event of the spring was the marriage of nephew Archie to Mrs. Schotte. Mrs. Burnett managed to be present on this occasion, but the pain was getting too much for her, sapping her strength, and, for all her courage, striking terror into her. She would be kept in bed days at a time following attacks, and soon she found she must be content to lie in her long chair under the oak-tree, and be told of the blooming that she could not walk about to see. Fortunately, from the window of her writing-room on the second floor she could look down on most of the front and side gardens. From her bedroom window she could see the west lawn and its borders; the bay and the boats and the sunsets.

By this time she knew, and the family knew, that she was desperately ill, although it seemed incredible that she would not shake herself free as she had done so many times before. But there was a fear in this illness unlike anything she had ever known before, and so much and such long-continued pain had weakened her defenses against it. Toward the end of the summer she grew absolutely confined to her bed—but not beaten.

The series of garden articles had been promised—they had been planned. She felt there was something she must say to the world about gardens, a message of happiness and hope she *could* give, and therefore she must. While she could, she went into her writing-room to work. Then she had herself propped up in bed, took her pad of blue-ruled manuscript paper on a pillow, and with one of the well-sharpened pencils which it was the loving privilege of mem-

bers of her household to supply, grimly went on with the task of telling the world what she had learned of the joys of gardening, and what a garden and flowers might mean to every one.

"Wheresoever I go I can never leave the earth alone," she wrote. "I must make some bit of it into a garden while I am near it. . . . As long as one has a garden, one has a future—and as long as one has a future, one is alive. It is remaining *alive* which makes life worth living—not merely remaining on the surface of the earth. And it is looking forward to a future which makes the difference between the two states of being." Even as she wrote these words she *knew*. Those who were gathered lovingly around her, trying to cheer and encourage her, were hoping—but she *knew*. And she wrote this a little farther on about life:

". . . To plant a packet of seeds, whether in a greenhouse in March or in a garden bed in May; to water them with the proper delicacy and restraint; to watch until the first tiny pale ghost of a leaf pushes aside the soil; to cry out with joy at the sight of it and then perhaps to discover that it is only a weed; to wait again, to wait longer than you thought you must wait; then after coming again and again and finding nothing, to arrive one day to see a small thrusting leaf once more, and then not one but another and another and at last a whole regiment of small valiant green soldiers marching in a row all crying aloud, 'We are alive! We have come from the Outside into the Garden! We are here—here!'

"Oh, well! There is a thrill in it, and one never gets over the sense of the mystery and the wonder. That is always new and startling as the spring is.

"First just the tiny seeds—little black things—twenty-five cents a packet; then the breathless waiting while the soft, silent, black earth seems to be doing nothing. Then

under the black earth slow, soft, unseen stirring. And then suddenly out of the darkness leaps life—life!"

And she quoted this passage, beloved all her lifetime, from George Borrow's "Lavengro":

"Life is sweet, brother! There's day and night, brother! Both sweet things; sun, moon and stars, brother! all sweet things. There is likewise a wind on the heath."

And for the last words of the article she repeated the refrain which had run all the way through it: "As long as you have a garden you have a future, and as long as you have a future you are alive."

Seated there in her bed she could look out of the window and see the glory of the late summer bloom in her own garden, at last a real profusion such as she had long worked for; the dainty, white borders of sweet alyssum; the yellows and oranges of the generous blooming marigolds; the early chrysanthemums just showing the color of their buds; the white and red phlox still holding on to its bloom, and the tall dahlias above, heavy-headed with huge and gorgeously varied floral stars.

In brief excursions from her bed into her writing-room, she was able to stand at the window and look at the abundance of the side garden below, the blue-ageratum borders that were the prize discovery of her later gardening years; the overflowing beds of white and pink petunias; colonies of white lilies standing all about in the cool and shady spots; snapdragons pink, snapdragons yellow, snapdragons white, crowding themselves into long beds and round beds; roses in the glory of their autumn perfection of form and color; gladiolus filling in the chinks everywhere with brave, erect spikes of red, white, and pink; and, too, the long beds of blasted, disease-twisted delphiniums, her chiefest loves of all the garden, who, even in this successful year, could not be freed from the mysterious Imp that attacked them. It

was a garden really to reward and comfort a passionate gardener, and to make her want gardens, the quiet and satisfying happiness of gardens—for all the world.

And, because the note of *life* in a garden rang through her last article with such poignant power, were not these words significant?

". . . The autumn is a flare of golden trumpets, singing in all brilliant tones the triumph of the past year, and heralding the future of the spring for which the winter will prepare."

When she laid down her pen after finishing this article, it was to fight Death for herself, as she had fought it so many years before, for Lionel. But she had seen Death's countenance, which her mother love had kept hidden from her adored son.

Who shall say what comes to an imagination to think or to feel when it is face to face with the final stark reality? What it says is said only to God. There are no words by which it can communicate in such an hour with human beings, and it writes no letters from the world "outside" even to its beloved ones to be quoted in a biography. But perhaps those who love it best, sitting by its bedside, can catch some hint of its thinking about things that are nearest to its heart. This murmured fragment is a bit of the record of those dark hours, when there were lucid moments between paroxysms of pain:

"Believe me, Vivvie, I never could write *anything* that would bring unhappiness into the world. Long ago, even, when I was a little girl writing in the attic room in the Ark at Knoxville, I began to feel that I could not have it on my conscience to make people unhappy, or make their minds foul with anything I had imagined or put on paper. There is enough of that in all our lives that we cannot get away from. What we all want is more of the other things—life,

love, hope—and an assurance that they are true. With the best that was in me I have tried to write more happiness into the world."

The end came, on October 29, 1924, in the home, surrounded by a host of loving friends and servants. From there she was borne to God's Acre at Roslyn, a few miles away. The world will acknowledge that she gave a just account of her talent, as she had hoped, and that she came, with right, into her reward of rest.

I, who for the Worker wrought,
Lay my pen and scroll aside.
Here is Rest—the Rest long sought,
Lo! it is the Eventide.

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